AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

ON THE PURPOSE, STRUCTURE, FORMAT AND USE OF SYLLABI

AT A MIDWEST FOUR-YEAR UNDERGRADUATE PRIVATE UNIVERSITY

By

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore how instructors at a mid-sized Midwest four-year undergraduate private university view the purpose, structure, format and use of their course syllabi. The theory of structural functionalism and a quantitative research approach were employed. A group administration approach was used to distribute the paper surveys during college, school or department meetings.

It was found that the syllabi purposes that instructors viewed as essential and useful were: a Communication Mechanism, a Planning Tool for Instructors, a Course Plan for Students, and a Contract. The instructors refer to syllabi for (1) schedule/calendar/assignments, (2) policies, (3) as a reminder, (4) for grading, and (5) for expectations.

The top ranked components by instructors were Academic Honesty; Plagiarism/Cheating; Textbook(s) & ISBN; Calendar/Outline/Assignments; Instructor Expectations of the Students; Requirements for Homework, Etc.; Grading Scale; Disability Services; Objectives; Academic Conduct; Goals; Attendance; Assessment Criteria; Makeup & Late Assignments; and Disclaimer on Syllabus.

Over 60% indicated they learned to create their syllabi through unofficial templates and informally through previous experience as a student. And all instructors indicated that syllabi have either no effect (27.0%) or a positive effect (67.5%) on student learning.

The purpose of a syllabus as a part of the structure and function of the higher education system will differ depending on the role of the person using it. As institutions

continue to adjust to accreditation and the public's demand for quality, the purpose and function of the syllabus will continue to change and adjust. An initial step to assist in this process of change would be to provide instructor workshops and training sessions related to syllabi design.

Chapter One - Introduction

Higher education has been responding to a number of criticisms in recent years regarding tuition increases and the lack of proof for learning outcomes (Arum & Roksa, 2011). The public is questioning whether colleges and universities are providing the quality of education for the cost of the tuition (Rothman, Kelly-Woessner, & Woessner, 2011). Tuition continues to increase but the quality of education may or may not. Meanwhile the government wants to ensure that students receiving nearly $90 billion in federal financial aid are attending quality institutions (Brittingham, 2009, p. 21). Increased accountability in the college and university accreditation processes was recommended and ultimately included in the Reauthorized Higher Education Act of 2008 (retitled the Higher Education Opportunity Act) (Eaton, 2010).

The purpose of the accreditation process is to assure and improve quality in higher education based on the institutions' specific mission (Arum & Roksa, 2011). "The accreditation processes look specifically for evidence of curricular alignment and program integrity, in part by examining syllabi" (Habanek, 2005, p. 63; Kramer & Swing, 2010; Parkes & Harris, 2002). If an institution declares they will have certain curricular standards, then those standards need to be understood and used by instructors as well as be shared with the students to know what will be expected of them. One way that the institution will know those standards are understood by faculty and shared with the students is through review of course syllabi. Instructors can have a positive impact with assignments and stimulating activities that demonstrate "learning and encourage students to be creative thinkers with the capacity to go on learning after their college days are

over" (Boyer, 1990, p. 24). The irony is that the syllabus, "a document that assumes such central importance in the classroom" (Baecker, 1998, p. 7), has had little empirical research done. "Probably no other contract [meaning the syllabus] we will ever encounter is drafted with so little attention paid to the language" (p. 7).

The syllabus is a common document used by colleges and universities to share information from the course instructor to the student (Altman 1989; Behnke & Miller, 1989; Eberly, Newton, & Wiggins, 2001; Grunert O'Brien, Millis, & Cohen, 2008; Matejka & Kurke, 1994; Smith & Razzouk, 1993; Thompson, 2007). Typical information in the document is the instructor's contact information and office hours, the classroom location and the course assignments.

> From various reviews, not all institutions require instructors to provide syllabi for their courses, and many other institutions do not specify content of syllabi. The consequence of this then is of course that faculty make individual decisions about what is provided to students in their courses. (Deputy Provost, personal communication November, 15, 2010)

Another dynamic is the prevalent use of technology and the internet; the syllabus is no longer assumed to be in a paper format. The syllabus could be available online and updated on a regular basis which is yet another decision and a process the instructor would need to make and complete.

As instructors create courses, they are looking at content issues (what to include), instructional techniques (how to present the content) and assessment approaches (what and how to grade assignments and ultimately determine student learning). "Course design is an arduous task in which syllabus design is one of the last stages in the process"

(Hockensmith, 1988, p. 340). Many instructors have no experience in syllabus or course design so they "rely on examples of syllabi and course design to which [they] have been exposed and are often poor examples" (Driscoll & Wood, 2007, p.144).

As Richard Diamond states:

> the research on teaching and learning is consistent: the more information you provide your student about the goals of the course, their responsibilities, and the criteria you will use to evaluate their performance, the more successful they will be as students. (as cited in Grunert O'Brien et al., 2008, p. xi)

The syllabus is the means of providing that needed information (learning outcomes and evaluation mechanism) as well as potentially more substantial course content. "The syllabus provides the first opportunity for faculty to encourage and guide students to take responsibility for their learning" (O'Brien et al., 2008, p. 5). In some situations, the syllabus is shared prior to the first class meeting through some electronic format (e.g., email or a learning management system such as Blackboard). In that situation, the syllabus is speaking unmediated on behalf of the instructor, which then makes having a thorough syllabus potentially very helpful for the students.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose or function of a syllabus could be many things such as a communication tool, a legal contract, or a pedagogical tool (Albers, 2003; Hockensmith, 1988; Matejka & Kurke, 1994; Parkes & Harris, 2002; Slattery & Carlson, 2005; Smith & Razzouk, 1993; Thompson, 2007). The look of a syllabus could then be very different depending on the purpose or function. Also, if an instructor incorporates multiple

purposes, the length of the syllabus could be longer and if not done well, confusing. "The need to conduct syllabus analysis becomes evident when we recognize the multiple uses of syllabi in higher education and the changing perception of the role [functional multiplicities] of syllabi in educating students" (Eberly et al., 2001, p. 57). If the instructor uses a syllabus as a communication mechanism to share assignments and grading information with students, that information may not be sufficient if the department wants to conduct curriculum reviews for program development purposes. The departments would need the syllabus to include items such as course goals, objectives and outcomes. Administrators need the syllabi to provide certain information for the integrity of programs and ultimately for accreditation. Meanwhile, students want to first know what they need to have done and by what date as was seen in a study by Becker and Calhoon (1999).

The structural components or content of a syllabus will also vary from instructor to instructor. Grunert O'Brien, et al., (2008) suggest 16 different categories of components to include in a syllabus. Some of these categories include: instructor information, course information such as a calendar, readings and assignments, grading and assessment information, and policy information. Other structural component suggestions include the proper use of pronouns which limits the use of 'we' on syllabi and uses more 'you' which focuses on what the student should be doing (Baecker, 1998), statements about what students can expect from the instructor (Slattery & Carlson, 2005), adding a disclaimer that the syllabus document is tentative and subject to change (Altman, 1989; Appleby, 1994; Behnke & Miller, 1989; Hammons & Shock, 1994; Nilson, 2007), adding a list of suggested reading (Behnke & Miller, 1989),

encouragement for students to ask for help (Perrine & Lisle, 1995), and considering an online version instead of paper (Cummings, Bonk, & Jacobs, 2002). With all of these different component options, it is important to remember that, "a soundly-crafted syllabus, based in curricular, subject matter and pedagogical knowledge, demonstrates the research and reflection put into the course's construction" (Albers, 2003, p. 70).

Statement of the Purpose:

The purpose of this study was to explore how instructors at a mid-sized Midwest four-year undergraduate private university view the purpose, structure, format and use of their course syllabi.

Research Questions

1. How do instructors at a mid-sized Midwest private university view the purpose/function of their syllabi?
2. What structural components of a course syllabus do instructors at a mid-sized Midwest private university consider essential and useful?
3. What syllabus format (paper/online) do instructors at a mid-sized Midwest private university use?
4. How do instructors at a mid-sized Midwest private university use syllabi in their courses?

Significance of the Study

Syllabi are part of a higher education institution's structure just like the people (students and faculty), buildings, and books. However, syllabi also play a variety of valuable functions such as a communication mechanism, a planning tool for instructors, a course plan for students, a teaching tool or resource, an artifact for teacher evaluation,

and evidence for accreditation. The function a syllabus serves depends on who is using it. While there are some similarities in use, overall students, faculty, administrators, and accreditation personnel all use the document for different purposes.

As a result of this study, the mid-sized Midwest undergraduate university will have a better understanding of how their instructors collectively perceive the purpose, structure, format and use of syllabi. The importance in this knowledge is three-fold. (1) Administrators may want to build an appropriate culture that encourages and supports the multiple purposes or formats of a syllabus including additional workshops and training sessions for syllabi creation. (2) Instructors may want to incorporate certain syllabi purposes or formats into their individual syllabi or as a collective group to create standards for their departments or even school or colleges related to syllabi creation. (3) Both administrators and instructors may want to develop processes and procedures to help students understand the importance of course syllabi or more specifically how the information found in syllabi such as learning outcomes is important to the student. In time, accrediting bodies may become the driving force behind the last initiative.

Institutions of higher education are trying to find ways to respond to the public as well as the accreditation organizations about the assessment of programs and student learning. One form of evidence that accreditation organizations (HLC, AACSB, ACPE, ACEJMC – see definition of terms) review related to curriculum and instruction are course syllabi. Institutions may want to reflect on the role the syllabus can play with curriculum development/reform as well as accreditation. The administration or the faculty governance may find it important for syllabi to require certain components at a department, college or institutional level such as course outcomes or policies.

Conceptual/Theoretical Framework

The conceptual framework of this study was objectivism/post-positivism – to seek an objective truth from one reality (Crotty, 1998). "The problems studied by post-positivists reflect the need to identify and access the causes that influence outcomes" (Creswell, 2009, p. 7). Within that framework, the theory for framing this study was structural functionalism. Structural functionalism is a sociological "macro-level theory focally concerned with large scale social structures and social institutions" (Ritzer, 1988, p. 201). Simply put, "the structural functionalism perspective emphasizes the interconnectedness of society by focusing on how each part influences and is influenced by other parts" (Mooney, Knox, & Schacht, 2000, p. 10). Talcott Parsons' structural functionalism "identifies three phenomena of a social system" (Trevino, 2001, p. xxix). It (1) identifies the most important structural units of a social system which are the roles and institutions (both of which have functional significance for the social system), (2) identifies the structural units' relationships with each other and the system's external environment, and (3) identifies the structural unit's ability to satisfy the needs of the social system. Within this perspective, the roles are only maintained to the point that the individuals are motivated through socialization, to meet the normative expectations that define these roles (Trevino, p. xxx).

Structural functionalism, also known as functionalism, "was the preeminent sociological perspective in the United States from the 1940s and 1950s" (Trevino, 2001, p. xxviii), but began declining in significance in the 1960s due to criticism that the theory cannot be generalized, that all functions are positive, and all structures and functions are necessary (Ritzer, 1988, p. 217). In the late 1980s, Jeffrey Alexander and Paul Colomy

tried to revive the theory under the name of neo-functionalism with a significant difference being the move to a more micro-level (p. 225).

In a neo-functionalism perspective, higher education is an institution within a complex social structure where institution members take the roles of students, instructors, and administrators as well as accreditation organizations and the government. More specifically, the university is an institution that provides education – instructors teach students. The common roles (i.e., instructors, students, administrators) in a higher education institution have specific functions within the system and the roles are also arranged in a certain way or structure typically related to their function. Instructors are part of the faculty that teach students and make academic decisions related to the curriculum. Students are part of the student body, which seeks education but are also active participants in education process. The 21st century student is viewed as "co-producer" (Ewell, 2006, p. 33), or a consumer of an educational service that is also the product of the service and must actively participate in the service process to help create the product output they desire. Administrators are the staff responsible for the management of the institutions such as selecting of students, collecting tuition, and hiring staff.

Other roles in higher education system, which are outside of the individual university structure, include accreditation organizations and the government. Accreditation organizations were created to help assure the quality of education program. The government can require that higher education institutions have certain accreditation to receive federal funds. Some students and parents may also want institutions to have the accreditation as a sign of quality in the program but also for the student to receive

federal financial aid assistance. Even an institution's alumni may be concerned about quality of their former institution if the school is asking them to make donation.

Another important role in the system is that of component parts. "Component parts … have a specific function in developing and preserving the basic patterns of the social system" (Trevino, 2001, p. xxx). Important component parts in a higher education system are the documents such as registration requirements, course catalogs and course syllabi. The document holds a meaning as well as a function just like a textbook, which also has a valuable role (or component part) in the education process (Chilcott, 1998, p. 106).

The role of course syllabi is to provide information but within that role, the document has multiple functions or purposes based on who is using the document. Depending on whom the person is and his/her role, their interest in the syllabi varies. Since a syllabus is created at the course level, the structure of the syllabus, the components included in the syllabus, and the purpose or function of the syllabus can vary.

For the purpose of this study, the micro-level was at an individual university level with approximately 6,000 students and instructors. The study relied on a survey research methodological approach to elaborate on a neo-structural functionalism perspective. Instructors were surveyed about how they view the purpose/function, structure, use and format of syllabi in their courses.

Definition of Key Terms

AACSB – Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business – an accreditation organization.

ACEJMC – Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication – an accreditation organization.

ACPE – Accreditation Council on Pharmacy Education – an accreditation organization

Accreditation – a process of external quality review created and used by higher education to scrutinize colleges, universities and programs for quality assurance and quality improvement (Eaton, 2009, p. 1).

Accrediting agencies – organizations that work with higher education institutions to establish if the institution meets the standards for being accredited. The United States has six regional accrediting agencies determined by geographic area. Specific programs also have separate accreditation agencies.

Administration – body of people who manage an organization.

College – an institution of higher learning that grants the bachelor's degree in liberal arts or science or both.

Contract – a written form of an agreement between two or more parties

Faculty – all members of a department within a university, college or school devoted to a particular branch of knowledge.

Faculty of instruction - personnel engaged in teaching and research having the rank of Instructor, Assistant Professor, Associate Professor or Professor and not primarily engaged in administration.

HLC – Higher Learning Commission – an accreditation organization.

Instructor – a generic term to reference personnel engaged in teaching regardless of their faculty status and rank with the college or university and could be interchangeable with the term faculty.

School – an institution within or associated with a college or university that gives instruction in a specialized field and recommends candidates for degrees.

Syllabus – [general definition] a document that outlines or summaries main points in a course of study or contents of a curriculum. Syllabi or syllabuses are the plural of syllabus.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore how instructors at a mid-sized Midwest four-year undergraduate private university view the purpose, structure, format and use of their course syllabi. With the increased interest and concern about assessment and accreditation in higher education, one document that is typically used as 'evidence' to show quality of a course and ultimately a program is the course syllabus; however, little attention is typically given or required to be given to the creation and dissemination of course syllabi. This study was a first step to determine instructors' perceptions about course syllabus at a particular higher education institution.

Chapter Two provides a review of literature on the theory of structural functionalism in a higher education institution, the different roles, purposes and uses of syllabi, the structural components included in syllabi, the format syllabi are created, and the role of syllabi in the accreditation process.

Chapter Three presents an overview of the methodology that guided this study. The chapter also includes the research setting, population, the survey instrument, the data collection procedures and the data analysis procedures. The chapter concludes with information regarding design issues and limitations of the study.

Chapter Four presents results for the data analyses. Frequencies and descriptive data were reported for each of the survey questions.

Chapter Five presents a discussion of the results and recommendations for practice and future research.

Chapter Two – Literature Review

This chapter provides an examination of the literature relevant to structural functionalism in a higher education system, higher education syllabi, the purpose and use of syllabi, the structural components included in syllabi, the format syllabi are created, and the role of syllabi in the accreditation process.

Structural Functionalism in a Higher Education System

Societies are made up of social systems where the system is the "interconnection between the social structure and the process" (Radcliffe-Brown, 1968, p. 12) also known as function. The units within the structure are roles and institutions (Kalu, 2011; Trevino, 2001). "The functionalist tradition also postulates that social systems meet certain needs and suggest that there are functional imperatives that must be met in order for a group to survive" (Chilcott, 1998, p. 103).

The higher education system can be treated as a social structure specializing in education. Some of the structured roles are those of the faculty (or instructors) and students. More specifically the roles can be categorized into groups within that system. These could include tenured faculty, non-tenured faculty, graduate students and undergraduate students (Parson & Platt, 1973, p. 395).

Different sociologists have been connected with the theory of structural functionalism but for the purpose of this study, greater focus has been given to Talcott Parsons (1902-1979) and in particular his seven assumptions for the structural functionalism perspective.

Parsons Structural Functionalism Assumptions. Parsons identified seven assumptions for the structural functionalism perspective:

(1) Systems have the property of order and interdependence of parts.

(2) Systems tend toward self-maintenance order, or equilibrium.

(3) The systems may be static or involved in an ordered process of change.

(4) The nature of one part of the system has an impact on the form that the other parts could take.

(5) Systems maintain boundaries with their environments.

(6) Allocation and integration are two fundamental processes necessary for a given state of equilibrium of a system.

(7) Systems tend toward self-maintenance involving the maintenance of boundaries and of the relationships of the parts to the whole, control of environmental variations, and by control of tendencies to change system from within. (Ritzer, 1988, p. 210)

Systems have the property of order and interdependence of parts (Parsons' Assumption 1). Roles within this system include instructors, students, administrators, and syllabi. Students and instructors have an obvious interdependence with students needing the instructors to teach them and instructors needing students to teach. Students are interdependent on one another for the general socialization and to some degree their learning process.

The instructors are interdependent on one another though they might not always want to acknowledge it. One or two instructors would not be able to teach the entire student body for they would not likely have all the diverse knowledge and background to do it.

Instructors and administration are interdependent, some of which they realize and some they deny or resist. Instructors might be involved in the faculty governance process but the broad business of the institution is done by administrators, from recruiting students and processing tuition, to stewarding alums for fundraising purposes. Some instructors might be asked to participate in these administrative type activities but the instructors' primary focus is the academic area. Administrators rely on the instructors to provide high academic standards in order for the administrator to more easily recruit and fundraise. Higher education is a unique type of institution. In some institutions, the administration has the responsibility to recruit students and instructors, raise money for resources, administer the resources and manage outside interests such as accreditation organizations but the instructors govern themselves and the curriculum. This shared approached to operating an education institution is called shared governance and is just one of a number of governing models (Trackman, 2008).

Some administrators have allowed the instructional issues and responsibilities for undergraduate education to shift from faculty or full-time instructors to adjunct faculty or part-time instructors' issue (Arum & Roksa, 2011, p.11). This shift or change then impacts how the instructors interact with one another because part-time instructors do not always receive the same kind of privileges that full-time faculty receive. Also if part-time instructors are hired, it can be associated with full-time instructors not having enough to do all the teaching as well as their other duties such as advising and committee work. Of all those functions (teaching, advising, committee work), it is easier to hire part-time positions to help with teaching. Another issue is the "fragmentation of faculty role probably produces a decline in quality in some aspects of faculty performance

through overwork and over extension and diminishes commitment to the teaching enterprise" (Parson & Platt, 1973, p. 408).

Administration and accreditation organizations are also interdependent. For administrators to achieve their institutional goals, they need to work with accreditation organizations to earn an acceptable accreditation status and the accreditation organizations exist to help make sure the institutions maintain high standards. Accreditation teams that visit an institution to determine if standards are being met are made up of faculty and administrators from other institutions. Institutions also have an obligation to meet the federal government standards in order to be eligible for federal research funds and for students to be able to receive federal financial aid to attend the institution (Ewell, 2006).

The syllabus, a document created by instructors for the students, can be strongly influenced by other instructors, department preferences/mandates, administration wishes/demands, and potentially accreditation requirements. Instructors and administrators intend for students to look at the syllabus as a source of communication from the instructors on what the course is about, the learning outcomes, the course calendar, the assignments, the assessment tools, and other general information needed for the course as well as policies. Therefore, instructors use the syllabus as a communication tool, planning tool, teaching tool, a contract and a permanent record while administrators and accreditation organizations use syllabi as evidence for meeting standards. Administrators use syllabi as a means of documenting what the institution's curriculum is for prospective students, current students as well as accreditation organization. This one document plays a vital function within the system.

Systems tend toward self-maintenance order, or equilibrium (Parsons' Assumption 2). Higher Education as an institution has practiced self-maintenance over the centuries with the modification of curriculum and adding processes to the structure to protect instructors with academic freedom. The syllabus has played an important role with the curriculum changes and approaches. Maintaining copies of the syllabi helped maintain a record for fellow instructors to refer to as examples, for instructors to help assess curriculum changes, for peers to evaluate tenure and promotion requests, and for accreditation organization to help determine quality. The contents and purpose of the syllabus has expanded over time and helped the system to self-maintain and adapt to the changes in the higher education system. An example of this change and adaptation is the inclusion of policies on syllabi such as policies related to student disabilities or academic honesty.

The systems may be static or involved in an ordered process of change (Parsons' Assumption 3). Instructors are responsible for the curriculum in a shared governance approach. They have a process for changing what is required in the curriculum such as adding courses or adding programs but the process takes time. In this approach, the instructors engage in a democratic process of review and voting. However, individual instructors may change how they teach a given class or what to include in the course without a formal process of requests or approval. The syllabus is one place where the difference in how instructors choose to teach their courses can be seen.

The nature of one part of the system has an impact on the form that the other parts could take (Parsons' Assumption 4). Instructors and students can affect the course outcomes or student learning both positively and negatively. Instructors could also

impact the institution via accreditation if they choose to maintain a high level of rigor in their courses or have no standards and pass all students regardless of the quality of their work. Students can actively participate in their learning and education thus having a positive impact on their own outcome in the process such as a degree and good job which also plays into accreditation reviews, or the students could do the bare minimum which could affect their ability to graduate, find a job and most specifically find a good job in their industry. Administrators may impact the teaching process, which affects the instructors and students if administrators change resource allocations such as salary or classroom maintenance and material. Accreditation organizations can affect the institution, which is ultimately all of the instructors, students, and administrators, as well as alumni if the agency does not grant the institution accreditation.

Systems maintain boundaries with their environments (Parsons' Assumption 5). The United States Government has maintained a boundary between itself and higher education institutions and most specifically private institutions. Though the government creates legislation that higher education institution must follow, the government has allowed the institutions to identify their mission and to work toward accreditation standards based on that mission (Brittingham, 2009).

In the shared governance, administrators will recruit and hire instructors but then the instructors are responsible for the curriculum. Individual faculty can determine what happens in their course regarding content and approach but it is the collective group of instructors that determine the curriculum.

Allocation and integration are two fundamental processes necessary for a given state of equilibrium of a system (Parsons' Assumption 6). For the system to work, it has

to be at or near that equilibrium point. In higher education, though the roles of instructor, student, and administrator, each can be at odds with one another at times. For the system to stay at or near equal, they have to work together to determine points of integration and allocation. An area of integration is when the instructors/staff, students, and administrators work together during the accreditation preparation process as well as the on-going process for curriculum and assessment review.

Systems tend toward self-maintenance involving the maintenance of boundaries and of the relationships of the parts to the whole, control of environmental variations, and by control of tendencies to change system from within (Parsons' Assumption 7). A typical system within a United States higher education institution is one where the instructors have a governing body with elected representatives as well as the student body having a governing system with elected representatives. Even the administration creates a governing body of people (typically called a Board of Trustees) not employed by the organization that helps hire the institution's President and approves the broad policies of the institution. The board's responsibility is to make sure that the faculty and administration "uphold and improve academic quality" (Ewell, 2006, p. vii).

Higher Education Accreditation

Accreditation and assessment are current issues in higher education but the origin of accreditation organizations or associations began in the 1890s (Brittingham, 2009, p. 13) and the assessment of learning in the 1930s (Shavelson, 2010, p. 22). Since the 1980s, "state legislators, trustees and regents are taking an increasingly active role in the measurement of educational outcomes" (Gifford, 2003, p. 15). The purpose of the accreditation process is to assure and improve the quality in higher education institutions

(Arum & Roksa, 2011). The concern is the quality of the output or outcomes and whether students are learning what institutions are saying they are teaching. Course content and curriculum decisions are made by the instructors, and the instructors also determine the level of the students learning in specific classes which are shared as grades to the student and administration. The question is how do the institutions show what is being learned and at what level. "One piece of evidence of what is being taught is through the course syllabi" (Habanek, 2005, p. 63) or "analyzing the curriculum in terms of course syllabi" (Kramer & Swing, 2010, p. 17). At the very least, the course syllabi indicate the instructors' intent regarding course material and content (Madson et al., 2004). Sharing the corresponding course grades are then a way of showing the level of learning in the course.

The United States has 80 recognized institutional and programmatic accrediting organizations (Eaton, 2009). Each accrediting organization has separate and specific documentation that they use to evaluate and determine accreditation status for institutions. One example of how one accreditation organization refers to syllabi is the 'Minimum Expectations within a Criteria for Accreditation' by the Higher Learning Commission – "Syllabi are provided for all courses offered" ("Documenting fundamental", 2010, p. 6). The Accreditation Council on Pharmacy Education is an example of a programmatic accrediting organization and their documentation indicates they look for "consistency of course syllabi" ("Accreditation Standards", 2011, p. 18). The Association to Advanced Collegiate Schools of Business has nine references to syllabi in their documents including "Time on task for students may be measured by review of syllabi, lecture notes and learning activities and samples of student work to

access the demands of course projects and learning expectations" ("Eligibility procedures", 2011, p. 53). The National Association of Schools of Art and Design do not specifically use the word syllabi but list components that need to be communicated to students, which are components typically listed in a syllabus.

Purpose and Function of Syllabi

The review of literature brings about eight major themes for the purpose or use of syllabi in higher education:

(1) a communication mechanism (Albers, 2003; Baecker, 1998; Doolittle & Siudzinski, 2010; Grunert O'Brien et al., 2008; Hammons & Shock, 1994; Matejka & Kurke, 1994; McDonald, Siddall, Mandell, & Hughes, 2010; Parkes, Fix, & Harris, 2003; Raymark & Connor-Green, 2002; Slattery & Carlson, 2005; Thompson, 2007);

(2) a planning tool for instructor (Abdous & He, 2008; Doolittle & Siudzinski, 2010; Eberly et al., 2001; Slattery & Carlson, 2005; Smith & Razzouk, 1993);

(3) a course plan for students (Matejka & Kurke, 1994; Nilson, 2997; Slattery & Carlson, 2005);

(4) a teaching or pedagogical tool (resource for student learning) (Albers, 2003; Doolittle & Lusk, 2007; Eberly et al., 2001; Grunert O'Brien et al., 2008; Hockensmith, 1988; McDonald et al., 2010; Parkes & Harris, 2002);

(5) an artifact for teacher evaluations/record keeping tool (Abdous & He, 2008; Albers, 2003; Appleby, 1994; Doolittle & Lusk, 2007; Parkes &

Harris, 2002; Slattery & Carlson, 2005);

(6) a contract of policies and procedures to be followed (Baecker, 1998; Danielson, 1995; Doolittle & Lusk, 2007; Eberly et al., 2001; Grunert O'Brien et al., 2008; Matejka & Kurke, 1994; Parkes & Harris, 2002; Slattery & Carlson, 2005);

(7) a socialization process for students to the academic environment (Collins, 1997; Danielson, 1995); and

(8) a scholarship opportunity for instructors (Albers, 2003; Nilson, 2007; Shulman, 2004).

The purpose or use varies depending on the role of the person reviewing or using the syllabi. An instructor might want to use any or all of these purposes, while administrators and accreditation organizations may be more concerned about the purpose of a syllabus as a communications tool, teaching tool, and permanent record. Some students may only have an interest in the syllabus as a course plan to learn what the assignments are but others might understand the communication purpose or the pedagogical use of the syllabus document.

(1) Communication Mechanism. By the traditional definition and historic perspective of a syllabus, communication is clearly a purpose for the document. Communication is a broad term that has a number of subcategories related to syllabi, which include (a) basic information, (b) prevention, (c) first impressions, (d) rhetoric, (e) motivation, and (f) conflict. This is an original list, not from an external source.

(a) Basic Information. Instructors should communicate basic information such as the course information, instructor information, assignment and grading information

and any specific policy information (Albers, 2003; Baecker, 1998; Doolittle & Siudzinski, 2010; Grunert O'Brien et al., 2008; Hammons & Shock, 1994; Matejka & Kurke, 1994; McDonald et al., 2010; Parkes et al., 2003; Raymark & Connor-Green, 2002; Slattery & Carlson, 2005; Thompson, 2007). Though instructors typically explain the information on the first day of class, the hard copy syllabus is helpful for the student to have, to refer to and to take notes on if the instructor gives additional details the student should remember.

As teaching approaches have changed over the years so have the communication needs and strategies. The university classroom was traditionally a lecture environment and the syllabus would indicate what chapters to read, what homework to complete and when tests were scheduled. Now more instructors are incorporating active learning techniques that can change how students learn (Grunert O'Brien et al., 2008). The students are interested in knowing the relevance of the course or course material to the broader context of their education; this explanation is not a traditional piece of information included on the syllabus. Instructors might explain it during class but if the course is online, it would be important to have it documented in some fashion such as in the syllabus. Communicating that relevance is also useful for curriculum review and accreditation.

(b) Prevention. Prevention was another approach identified in the literature (Doolittle & Siudzinski, 2010). The idea is teachers will anticipate the students' needs and questions and provide the answers in the syllabi. The information is not necessarily different or unique but that the instructor purposely anticipates student questions and includes the material as a preventative measure.

(c) First Impressions. Another communication issue associated with the syllabus is its impact on the students' first impressions of the instructor and the course. First impressions are important in most relationships and a teacher/student relationship is no different (Danielson, 1995; Matejka & Kurke, 1994). The syllabus is typically the first topic of discussion on the first day of class before the students have typically made an opinion about the teacher or the class. The teacher has this opportunity to introduce him/herself to the class using the syllabus and to discuss things such as pedagogical philosophies (Appleby, 1994). The construction of the syllabus document, the inclusion or exclusion of information, the tone of the document as well as how the instructor discusses the syllabus and explains it, all go into that one and only opportunity to make a first impression (Grunert O'Brien et al., 2008; Thompson, 2007).

(d) Rhetoric. In Baecker's (1998) study about the rhetoric of the syllabus, the use of pronouns in the syllabus was examined and how the use affects classroom power and authority. Based on findings from the study, Baeker suggests to avoid using the pronoun 'we.' "We is an example of an ambiguous linguistic marker for power, which can be used both to indicate solidarity or community and as a means to coerce the audience into behavior that benefits the speaker" (Baeker, p. 58). An instructor wanting to set the appropriate level of authority in the classroom might use 'I' when indicating what he or she will be doing versus what the student will be doing instead using the a royal 'we' to refer to everyone which in some situation would not be accurate or appropriate. An example of an inaccurate or inappropriate use is including sentences in the syllabus such as 'We will be learning about xyz.' The instructor already knows the material so using 'we' might be a way to try to build community as Baeker (1998) mentioned but it might

not be received in that manner by the students. The consideration of rhetoric also reflects back on the importance of first impressions of syllabi mentioned in the previous section.

(e) Motivation. Another communication aspect of a syllabus is to motivate students. Some students might not appreciate or recognize the importance and value of a course. The course might be one required for the major but the student does not like the topic or maybe it is a general education course the student is not interested in. Instructors have the opportunity to help or encourage students to be excited about the course by how the instructor presents the course. The syllabus can be written in a positive tone that provides information that is important to the student.

Harris (1993) identified ten properties that could potentially make a syllabus more motiving; these properties are: (1) the syllabus conveys enthusiasm for the subject, (2) the syllabus conveys the intellectual challenge of the course, (3) the syllabus provides for personalization of content by the student, (4) the syllabus conveys respect for the ability of the students, (5) the syllabus includes the course goals which are attainable and stated positively, (6) the syllabus includes grading policies that convey the possibility of success, (7) the syllabus includes assignments that are adequately specified, (8) the syllabus includes assignments that vary in type of required expertise, (9) the syllabus includes information about how frequent student learning is assessed, and (10) the syllabus conveys the teacher's desire to help students individually. In a number of these properties, the point is not to add more content but to articulate the instructor's enthusiastic or passionate about their subject and the students' success in the course. The course should be intellectually challenging yet attainable and part of the students' success should be a feeling of accomplishment for learning the material.

(f) Conflict. All these different communicated pieces of information can also cause some conflict. One conflict is determining what information is considered the most important to communicate thus placing it at or near the beginning. Studies (Garavalia, Hummel, Wiley, & Huitt, 1999; McDonald et al., 2010) have indicated that typically the information that instructors consider the most important is not the same information that students do. Another example of conflict is the instructor asserting authority in the syllabus (Singham, 2007; Thompson, 2007) but also needing to "model enthusiasm for the course content" in the syllabus (Thompson, 2007, p. 55).

Another conflict in the communication aspect of a syllabus is when it comes to the purpose of the syllabus. A syllabus is a written document that shares information, which crosses over to other purposes such as a contract between a student and an instructor. If an instructor wants to make a good first impression that is friendly, the tone of the syllabus will not likely sound the same as a syllabus that is written more like a contract. A syllabus as a permanent record can cause conflict because of who the audience for the document could be – student, administrator, instructor, or accreditation organizations.

(2) Planning Tool for Instructor. Designing or planning a course and writing the syllabus for the course can be interrelated activities for some instructors (Slattery & Carlson, 2005). Writing the syllabus can aid in the course design and development process. Syllabus "construction represents a critical moment in instructors' curriculum/ course development thought process" (Doolittle & Siudzinski, 2010, pp. 29-30). The syllabus design process as a planning tool is logistical in nature such as assigning time frames or days to the content structure. For example – chapter 3 will take approximately

45 minutes to discuss and show examples and the activity included will be another 15 minutes so that could fit into a 75 minute class period. The instructor needs to plan for schedule issues related to holidays or breaks in the term, when to plan assessment exercises and allowing for appropriate amounts of time to complete homework or assignments.

The purpose of a syllabus as that of a planning and development tool may initially benefit the instructor but the students could possibly benefit from the instructor taking extra time for planning the course and syllabus. Also, the more complete and informative the syllabus is for the student, the more likely it will be beneficial for administrators to review as well as accreditation organizations.

(3) A Course Plan for Students. "The syllabus should represent the overall plan of action for the course" (Matejka & Kurke, 1994, p. 115). By definition, a syllabus will document the layout of topics but laying it out in a timeline with an explanation of the goals and the necessary requirements to achieve the goals is the creation of a plan that the students can follow (Slattery & Carlson, 2005). A similar approach is through the use of a graphic syllabus or a concept map to visually demonstrate how all of the topics come together for the particular course (Nilson, 2007). "Over the past several years, we have seen a reemergence of a more visual culture, one in which knowledge and information are increasingly conveyed in graphical forms and are decreasingly communicated in text" (Nilson, p. 14). Regardless of whether the syllabus is more text or graphic based, the point of having a course plan for the student to follow is a major purpose for the syllabus (Matejka & Kurke, 1994; Nilson, 2007; Slattery & Carlson, 2005).

The course plan purpose can be beneficial to the students but the course plan goes along with being a planning tool for instructors to layout the course with assignments and readings and other classroom activities.

(4) Teaching (pedagogical) Tool / Resource for Student Learning. A teaching tool is an approach that is supposed to enhance or help facilitate an instructor's ability to impart knowledge or give instruction. The use of a course syllabus could be a teaching or learning tool (Eberly et al., 2001), which helps students. The simple function of a syllabus as a communication device that lists the course objective and outcomes on the syllabus helps the students understand what is expected thus a teaching tool as well (Albers, 2003). Having specific assignment information on the syllabus or including a grading rubric (Grunert O'Brien et al., 2008) for the assignment can give students instructions on what skills to work on. An instructor could include more specific information to help students improve their time management skills, to identify the time spent outside of class or tips on how to do well in the course, to provide information about campus resources that might help the students and to indicate when he or she is available to meet with the student (Parkes & Harris, 2002).

The syllabus is the tool or guide that students refer to regarding their learning in-class and out-of-class learning (Hockensmith, 1988). In a study of student perceptions of syllabi (Doolittle & Lusk, 2007), students were asked how they made use of course syllabi during the term and their choices were study tool, reference tool, time management tool or a documentation tool. Each choice had a short description behind it that referred to items on the syllabus. Of the 1399 participants, 88% indicated reference tool, 80% indicated time management tool, 53% indicated study tool and 32% indicated a

documentation tool. "The syllabus [can be] used as a *knowledge repository*, explained on the first day of class and never addressed again, or [as] a *knowledge guide*, introduced the first day and referred to repeatedly during the semester as a road map" (Doolittle & Lusk, p. 74).

(5) An Artifact for Teacher Evaluations / Record Keeping Tool. The course syllabus can easily be an archival document. Administrators typically want copies of the syllabus for the purpose of teacher evaluations or a supplement to class observation evaluations and student evaluations. Instructors might want to keep copies to observe their own growth and changes over the years as well as for documentation on application portfolios (Appleby, 1994) or for tenure and promotion reviews (Slattery & Carlson, 2005). Syllabi have numerous pieces of information that institutions need to keep for legal and planning reasons such as transfer and articulation agreements, promotion requirements, curriculum planning, and accreditation document. These pieces include course title, dates for the course, number of credit hours, instructor of record name and rank, any prerequisites, name of required textbook and other material, course objectives, description of course content, and description of the assessment procedures (Abdous & He , 2008; Albers, 2003; Doolittle & Lusk, 2007; Parkes & Harris, 1992; Slattery & Carlson, 2005).

The artifact purpose might not be of much interest to some students but instructors should have an interest for their own professional development. The information needed for artifact purposes is not different or unique; it goes back to record keeping for the administration and accreditation organizations.

(6) Contract - Policies and Procedures to Be Followed. A contract is a written agreement between two or more people and in higher education by the 1970s the syllabus became that type of implied contract (Brosman, 1998). The syllabus sets forth the course requirements for the class and what is expected of the students to earn certain grades including specific policies and procedures (Danielson, 1995; Doolittle & Lusk, 2007; Eberly et al., 2001; Matejka & Kurke, 1994; Parkes & Harris, 2002; Singham, 2007; Slattery & Carlson, 2005; Smith & Razzouk, 1993). Though many campus legal counsels encourage their institutions to not refer to syllabi as contracts (Grunert O'Brien et al., 2008), it is still important for instructors to know that administrators will refer to the syllabi during grievance hearing. Adding a syllabus disclaimer such as, "The above schedule and procedures in this course are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances" (Hammons & Shock, 1994, p. 14) is a common practice (Appleby, 1994; Behnke & Miller, 1989; Hammons & Shock, 1994; Nilson, 2007). "Probably no other contract [meaning the syllabus] we will ever encounter is drafted with so little attention paid to the language" (Baecker, 1998, p. 7).

The contract purpose does not necessarily benefit the student, the instructor or the administration but having an instructor realize that the document could be reviewed like a legal document at a later time could lead the instructor to include specific information such as policy statements including a disability policy as well as a disclaimer.

(7) Socialization for Students to Academic Environment. Understanding that a classroom environment is like a mini-organization with its own culture, the instructor and students play certain roles within that environment that has shared common values, attributes and knowledge. As students enter new classroom (mini-organizations)

environments, they might come with anxiety of not knowing what to expect. The instructor can reduce that anxiety with communication or help socialize the student through communication. One of the strategies for communication in the classroom environment is the course syllabus especially in an online course. "To the extent that the syllabi can transmit role-related and cultural knowledge, it is contributing to the classroom socialization process" (Danielson, 1995, p. 8).

The socialization of students at the higher education level has been in the literature for over 40 years with the work of Parsons and Platt (1973) and Radcliffe-Brown (1968) to mention a few of the early works. As a general point, higher education institutions are involved in the socialization of students not only in the classroom but outside of it as well (Parsons & Platt, 1973). The institution is the structure at which students experience the process of growth in behavior as well as in education and thus the institutions are also serving the socialization and education functions for the students (Radcliffe-Brown, 1968). Another example of socialization in the classroom is the creation of academic discourse communities (Collins, 1997). The instructor as well as the students can create an environment where they and others feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and discussing academic topics. "Theoretically, it appears that course syllabi have a very real role in classroom socialization. Initial results indicate that course syllabi have the ability to transmit role-related and cultural knowledge, initiate dialogue and negotiation, and reduce uncertainty or 'surprise" (Danielson, 1995, p.10).

The socialization purpose has benefits for all the groups but in different ways. The information provided on a syllabus would not be different but how it is stated or presented might be. The benefit to the student would be the added comfort in the class.

A fair amount of benefit can be had with a little time spent making a syllabus sound more pleasant.

(8) Scholarship Opportunity for Instructors. Instructors are typically expected to do research in their field and write books or articles to share their scholarship or intellectual property with other academics but not all instructors are equally focused on research. Many instructors focus on improving their teaching and enhancing teaching and learning strategies. In the early 1990s, institutions started considering other activities to fall under scholarship (Boyer, 1990) including "teaching, integration, application, and discovery [which] provides a framework to capture the complexity and the scholarliness associated with the syllabus and its design" (McDonald et al., 2010, p. 113). Teacher evaluations include the review of course syllabi, student evaluations and class observation (Boyer, 1990). Individual instructor's syllabi are likely to be very unique and even if the institution requires certain items to be added, the instructor still decides how the course will be taught (Albers, 2003). "A syllabus reflects the professional judgment of faculty in higher education" (Nilson, 2008, p. 7) and could share with the students how scholars work in a given field (Shulman, 2004).

Besides the issue of what higher education professionals consider to teaching related activities to be scholarship such as the creation of syllabi, there is controversy about who owns the syllabus content. The American Association of University Professor's Statement of Copyright identified faculty intellectual property to include class notes and syllabi (Smith, 2002). Some institutions consider syllabi university property since instructors were hired to teach courses and the course syllabi are part of that contract (Diaz, 2010; Loggie et al., 2007; Sinor, 2008).

The scholarship purpose might not be of direct interest to some students but could positively impact them. An instructor viewing a syllabus as a scholarly writing piece that reflects one's knowledge in a field might have a significant impact on the look and feel of the syllabus. This change to the syllabus might have a positive impact on the students' learning experience, which the students might share in course and instructor evaluations. These evaluations could be used for determining teaching awards.

The syllabus has many purposes and four of them can be associated with the accreditation and assessment needs of an institution. (1) Communication with students in regards to the course information or for teaching purposes is important to accreditation organizations. (2) The syllabus will be important for the instructors regarding planning for their course as well as for curriculum design on a program level or university level (Cunningham & Omolayole, 1998) which is important for determining quality. (3) Accreditation organizations use the syllabi as documentation or an artifact for record keeping (Abdous & He, 2008). (4) Some institutions develop universal or department syllabus templates to help assure continuity for reporting (Passman & Green, 2009; Brosman, 1998).

Considerations When Constructing Syllabi

"Syllabus construction remains undertheorized" (Cardozo, 2006, p. 412). Although instructors are masters in their field of expertise, syllabus construction is not typically included in graduate work. Instructors look to senior instructors for input and suggestions on how to create and what to include in a syllabus (Eberly et al., 2001). Regardless of the purpose of the syllabus, an instructor should consider a number of issues including:

(a) The syllabus is the first opportunity to make a first impression about the course (Thompson, 2007).

(b) Instructors should reflect on what assumptions they have about the course content, about themselves as instructors, as well as assumptions about students. These assumptions will have an impact on the syllabus (Lowther, Stark, & Martens, 1989).

(c) The primary audience for a syllabus is the students even though the syllabus might have other designated purposes and stakeholders (i.e., administrators, accreditation organizations or other instructors) (Hockensmith, 1988).

(d) The syllabus needs to clearly articulate to the students that they are accountable for their learning (Habanek, 2005).

(e) Students typically prefer active approaches not passive (Boyer, 1990; Cardozo, 2006; Grunert O'Brien et al., 2008; Wingfield & Black, 2005).

Formats of Syllabi

Today's syllabi can come in two basic delivery formats – paper or online. The online version can be broken down into subcategories - static documents online, online or web versions with updates, or online interactive (Afros & Schryer, 2009; Cumming, Bonk & Jacobs, 2002; Gifford, 2003; Grigorovici, Nam & Russill, 2003; Maurino, 2006; Rankin, 2002). Formats can also be predetermined by the instructor's department or university via templates. Instructors may not realize the different advantages and disadvantages of each format.

Paper. Traditionally syllabi are distributed as paper documents on the first day of class. The paper version is considered static or not changing. If the instructor changes any content, the students either have to note it on their own syllabus or the instructor

might create a second version of the document or more likely distribute an addendum with additions or corrections. A "quasi-paper" (Afros & Schryer, 2009, p. 230) approach for some instructors is adding URL addresses or web links into their paper syllabi. The format is still paper but if the students are interested, they can choose to investigate the content from the web links in the syllabus and thus making the syllabus content more interactive.

Online. The internet has brought about online alternatives to the paper syllabus – static documents online, online or web versions for updates, or online interactive versions. Though the purpose for an online format still includes the need to communicate the course information to students, the approach also allows more learning opportunities and adds some socialization aspects. The students who have grown up with technology use the technology for more social aspects (Facebook and Twitter) so their socialization will come just as much from online interaction as it does from classroom interaction (Cummings et al., 2002; Magolda & Platt, 2009).

Static Documents Online. The most basic way instructors can take their syllabus from a paper only version to an online version is by placing a paper version of the syllabus in the form of a PDF file into a learning management system such as Blackboard or by creating a webpage that is not intended to be updated. The benefits for putting the static version online is to eliminate making paper copies and taking a more environmental friendly approach; if done in conjunction with the paper distribution, students have an alternative if they lose their paper version, and an online version can be an easier way for administrators to extract copies for their records.

Online or Web Versions with Updates. For this option, the instructor's intention is to keep the syllabus information current. The benefit to the instructor and the student is how fast and easy the information can be updated. The syllabus information could be included as a single document in a learning management system or distributed through multiple sections of the system or created as a course webpage. The distinction is it can be updated on the instructor side only.

Online Interactive. This online option allows for the instructor to update the syllabus content and allows for the student to interact with the content. The literature includes a variety of terms for interactive online options: web based (Afros & Schryer, 2009; Maurino, 2006); electronic (Cumming, Bonk & Jacobs, 2002); e-syllabus (Gifford, 2003); and online syllabus (Grigorovici, Nam & Russill, 2003; Rankin, 2002). Regardless of the term, the benefit of the interactive online option comes with the ability to enhance the learning by connecting the student in the classroom to the research and other active learning opportunities. "Enhancement of these connections by means of the internet has given rise to a new species – the web-mediated syllabus" (Afros & Schryer, 2009, p. 224). The syllabus becomes a living document that changes as the specific class needs are identified such as customizing the readings or resource list (Magolda & Platt, 2009).

This interactive component of a syllabus has not always been deemed useful. In the early years of the internet, Grigorovici et al. (2003) reported that students prefer low or moderate interactivity over high interactivity. As the population of students continues to become more "digital natives" (Prensky, 2001, p.1), the preference for more interactivity is likely to increase.

Just as the student population becomes more familiar with interactive online syllabi, instructors are becoming more comfortable with using technology in their classroom. A basic strategy of communicating the syllabus information to the class is to use classroom technology such as an Elmo, Blackboard, PowerPoint, or Word document to show and discuss the syllabus (Thompson, 2007, p. 65). Another basic strategy is to incorporate online sources into the paper syllabus and then begin moving to the online syllabus where the sources can be hypertext links (Kousha & Thelwall, 2008). The hypertext link makes it very fast and easy for the student to click and be instantly taken to useful resource to continue their studying.

Universal or Departmental Templates. Universal or departmental templates, which are typically in paper format, are common at some institutions (Brosman, 1998; Passman & Green, 2009). The main purpose of templates is to help maintain the integrity of the collective documents to include basic information such as plagiarism policies, course withdrawal policies and procedures, and disability services policies. These types of items are important to the administration and sometimes accreditation organizations as well as students. Another type of template that an institution or department might provide is a list of components for an instructor to include.

Components of Syllabi

The literature on syllabi and the components included in them are relatively consistent with most of the components mentioned by multiple authors. A few studies (Becker & Calhoon, 1999; Deck, Marcis & Keller, 2010; Marcis, Keller, Deck & Carr, 2005) identified 28 or 29 common components of syllabi and a recent study by Doolittle & Siudzinski (2010) “found 81 [syllabi] components mentioned in at least one text or

article" (p. 31). The 81 components were categorized into four main categories: instructor information, course information, grading information, and policy information. A fifth category is not mentioned in the study but is needed for miscellaneous components that do not clearly go into one of the other four areas but are important and worthy of inclusion.

Instructor Information. The literature identified 15 components related to instructors that can be categorized into three areas: basic contact information, philosophy of teaching, and method of instruction.

Basic Contact Information. The basic instructor contact information (instructor name, phone number, email address, office hours and office location) is typically identified as essential (Altman, 1989; Appleby, 1994; Behnke & Miller, 1989; Doolittle & Siudzinski, 2010; Eberly et al., 2001; Lowther, Stark, & Martens, 1989; Marcis et al., 2005; Matejka & Kurke, 1994; Parkes & Harris, 2002; Passman & Green, 2009; Seeman, 2010; Slattery & Carlson, 2005; Thompson, 2007). Students use the information for the purposes of communicating with the instructor and it provides the first steps of the students' socialization to the specific course. The inclusion of instructor information is also important for record keeping, archival purposes, and contract purposes (Abdous & He, 2008; Albers, 2003; Appleby, 1994; Doolittle & Lusk, 2007; Parkes & Harris, 2002; Slattery & Carlson, 2005) in that it clearly defines who the instructor is for all those respective purposes.

More controversial contact information is the instructor's cell phone number and social networking ID. Some instructors may find it appropriate to include their home phone number or a cell phone number on their syllabus. If the phone number is included,

it is typically accompanied by times that calls are acceptable (Ball State, 2001). One institution acknowledged the decision for a faculty member to provide a home or cell phone is entirely up to that person (NIACC, 2009).

The inclusion of a social networking ID for applications such as Facebook or LinkedIn on a syllabus is not specifically mentioned in the literature. However, the use of social networking as a means to 'digitally mediate learning' appears in the literature. "Whether working in fully online, blended, or face-to-face learning contexts, instructors may now access technologies that allows students and faculty to engage in cooperative and collaborative learning" (LeNoue, Hall, & Eighmy, 2011, p. 4). This technology may help with the certain aspects of the learning process but the social aspect of these different applications may deter some instructors. However if an instructor can find a comfortable middle ground for social networking in the course, the connectedness provided by the social aspect may help some students acclimate even better to the class and to school.

Philosophy of Teaching. The instructor's philosophy of teaching can mean different things but the vital issue is expressing them to the students on the syllabus (Appleby, 1994; Cullen & Harris, 2009; Matejka & Kurke, 1994; Smith & Razzouk, 1993). Along with their teaching philosophy, instructors should share their expectations of students including ethical behavior and work habits (Davis, 1993; Parkes & Harris, 2002; Smith & Razzouk, 1993). An instructor's assumptions about students (Lowther et al., 1989) might be included in the syllabus, but at the very least will influence the instructor when he or she is creating the syllabus.

Method of Instruction. Instructors may include information about their methods of instruction including specific teaching tools (Eberly et al., 2001; Estes, 2007; Hammons & Shock, 1994; Marcis et al., 2005; Matejka & Kurke, 1994; Parkes & Harris, 2002; Slattery & Carlson, 2005; Smith & Razzouk, 1993) as a means for planning their course as well as informing the students what to anticipate during the class sessions. Many of the same authors (Estes, 2007; Hammons & Shock, 1994; Matejka & Kurke, 1994; Slattery & Carlson, 2005; Smith & Razzouk, 1993) also expressed the need to share the purpose or rational for particular teaching tools. Sharing with students the rational for a particular activity may help them to understand its importance as it relates to course objectives.

Another component to consider including is a statement about what students can expect from instructor (Slattery & Carlson, 2005). This expectation is related to the timeliness of feedback to students regarding specific assignments or the overall course. This section in the syllabus could also include tips on how the student can be more successful in the course (Parkes & Harris, 2002; Habanek, 2005). Instructors can use this section to reiterate the need for students to do particular activities such as homework and participate in class or to ask for help (Gaffney, 2009; Perrine & Lisle, 1995). Lastly, the section could reference the students' opportunity to evaluate the instructor at the end of the course (Hammons & Shock, 1994; Smith & Razzouk, 1993) or earlier if the instructor asks for midterm feedback to help improve their instruction techniques (Davis, 1993).

Course Information. The literature identified 23 components related to course information that can be categorized into four areas: basic course information, course details, courses text and resources, and course content.

Basic Course Information. The basic course information (course name, number, semester/year, credit hours, department day/time, location) is typically identified as essential (Altman, 1989; Appleby, 1994; Doolittle & Siudzinski, 2010; Eberly et al., 2001; Hammons & Shock, 1994; Lowther et al., 1989; Marcis et al., 2005; Matejka & Kurke, 1994; Parkes & Harris, 2002; Passman & Green, 2009; Seeman, 2010; Slattery & Carlson, 2005; Smith & Razzouk, 1993). The information is less for the students because they have other means of obtaining or receiving this information (i.e., course schedules) and more for administrative purposes such as transfer credits and articulation agreements needing to know how many credit hours a course has been given and maintaining historic records. The literature mentions the value of including a course drop date (Davis, 1993; Marcis et al., 2005) in the syllabus. The value is that students know the deadlines in which they have to make a decision about remaining in the class without monetary penalty. Another piece of information that research suggests is important for students to know upfront is course prerequisites (Hammons & Shock, 1994; Marcis et al., 2005; Passman & Green, 2009). Though the automated systems that many schools have for course registration should prevent a student from registering in a class that requires another course they have not completed, automated and manual systems have flaws. Including the prerequisite information on the syllabus allows the student to review the necessary requirement for proper enrollment in the class. Along those lines, instructors could include any technical skills needed or recommended (Madson, Melchert & Whipp, 2004) as well as explaining the role of technology (Eberly et al., 2001; Grunert O'Brien et al., 2008; Parkes & Harris, 2002) so students are not surprised later in the course.

Course Details. The course details include the course description or purpose, objectives, goals, and learning outcomes. The course description (Altman, 1989; Appleby, 1994; Doolittle & Siudzinski, 2010; Hammons & Shock, 1994; Marcis et al., 2005; Slattery & Carlson, 2005) is important for the student when selecting a class and understanding what will be offered, but is also important for curriculum planning and determining transfer credits. The course objectives and goals (Altman, 1989; Appleby, 1994; Behnke & Miller, 1989; Doolittle & Siudzinski, 2010; Hammons & Shock, 1994; Lowther et al., 2004; Marcis et al., 2005; Matejka & Kurke, 1994; Parkes & Harris, 2002; Passman & Green, 2009; Slattery & Carlson, 2005; Smith & Razzouk, 1993) are typically stating what students should expect to learn or accomplish by taking the course. Another term in the literature is learning outcomes (Passman & Green, 2009).

Course Text and Resources. Course textbook titles and more specifically the International Standard Book Number (ISBN) have recently become a requirement for higher education institutions to provide to students prior to the start of a class. This requirement came with the passing of the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008. With the increased cost of textbooks and course material, the schools and affiliated bookstores have to provide a way for students to know which textbooks courses require so the student can purchase the book from a distributor of their choice. Providing book title and ISBN information on the syllabus is just another opportunity for students to learn the text information and to also confirm they have purchased the correct material (Appleby, 1994; Doolittle & Siudzinski, 2010; Lowther et al., 2004; Marcis et al., 2005; Matejka & Kurke, 1994; Parkes & Harris, 2002; Passman & Green, 2009; Smith & Razzouk, 1993).

Other related course material might be items distributed in class such as handouts or items that need to be purchased prior to class such as calculator, specific software, art supplies, or writing journals (Grunert O'Brien et al., 2008; Hammons & Shock, 1994; Parkes & Harris, 2002; Smith & Razzouk, 1993;). Other resources appropriate to list include library information related to material, librarian assistance or building hours (Altman, 1989; Smith & Razzouk, 1993), and other student support services such as contact information for a writing center, tutoring center, or counseling center (Doolittle & Lusk, 2007; Marcis et al., 2005; Parkes & Harris, 2002).

Course Content. Course content includes the course material, course specific calendar, outline, assignment list, and requirements such as homework, text, and labs, and a cognitive map or graphic syllabus. These can be essential pieces of information for students, but they also provide an opportunity for instructors to use the syllabus as a teaching tool.

Course Specific Content. The syllabus itself can be the teaching tool and include course specific information (Altman, 1989; Doolittle & Siudzinski, 2010; Eberly et al., 2001; Marcis et al., 2005; Smith & Razzouk, 1993; Thompson, 2007) that begins orienting the student in the terms and concepts (Garavalia et al., 1999) specific to the course. This approach can demonstrate to the students the enthusiasm the instructor has for the course (Habanek, 2005) and potentially encourage or motivate the students (Harris, 1993). Additional information that instructors can add to the syllabus that helps students with content is a list of suggested reading such as a bibliography or reference list including web links (Afros & Schryer, 2009; Behnke & Miller, 1989; Doolittle & Siudzinski, 2010; Kousha & Thelwall, 2008; Grunert O'Brien et al., 2008; Lowther et al,

1989; Parkes & Harris, 2002). Some instructors might be inclined to create reading packets for students but due to copyright laws, instructors should be cautious how they incorporate those types of documents. Students are often curious about resources that will help them study or learn outside of the class (Behnke & Miller, 1989; Doolittle & Siudzinski, 2010; Grunert O'Brien et al., 2008; Hockensmith, 1988; Kousha & Thelwall, 2008) thus another component that could be added to the syllabus. Even a line or two about how much time outside of class students should be dedicating toward the class could be helpful to many students (Marcis et al., 2005; Parkes & Harris, 2002).

Course Calendar and Outline. The course calendar is a common piece of information included in a syllabus (Altman, 1989; Doolittle & Siudzinski, 2010; Marcis et al., 2005; Rambler, 1982; Seeman, 2010). The calendar could include topics covered for a particular class or the due dates for assignments. The calendar could be an outline or schedule of activities (Appleby, 1994; Behnke & Miller, 1989; Hammons & Shock, 1994; Lowther et al., 2004; Parkes & Harris, 2002; Seeman, 2010; Slattery & Carlson, 2005; Smith & Razzouk, 1993) and reading assignments (Behnke & Miller, 1989; Brosman, 1998; Matejka & Kurke, 1994; Passman and Green, 2009; Smith & Razzouk, 1993). Some instructors include specific reading material covered on each exam (Marcis et al., 2005), due dates of out-of-class assignments (Doolittle & Siudzinski, 2010; Marcis et al., 2005) and dates and times of special events outside of class (Marcis et al., 2005; Smith & Razzouk, 1993).

Course Requirements. Course requirements include homework assignments, tests, laboratory work, group work and any other activity the instructor identifies as something that needs to be completed for the course or has an assessment or grade

associated with it (Appleby, 1994; Brosman, 1989; Doolittle & Siudzinski, 2010; Marcis et al., 2005). Some instructors include attendance (Marcis et al., 2005; Seeman, 2010) and class participation (Hrycaj, 2006; Marcis et al., 2005; Parkes et al., 2003) as requirements.

Course Cognitive Maps and Graphic Syllabi. A syllabus is a written outline for a course but the document does not necessarily make a clear connection between topics. Sometimes the connection has to be made through some other process in the classroom such as a textbook or the instructor's lecture. The inclusion of a cognitive map in the syllabus is an attempt to add a visual aspect for associating the concepts (Matejka & Kurke, 1994, Nilson, 2007). The idea is "visuals communicate the structure of and interrelationship among the topics to be covered and the abilities students will acquire (Nilson, 2007, p. 13). Purposely creating a graphic syllabus (Nilson, 2007) is a pedagogical tool that helps students learn the connections between concepts and helps students understand the course plan which is also one of the potential purposes of a syllabus. An example of including the graphic syllabus with a traditional syllabus is adding a timeline or dates to the graphic showing when the concepts will be covered during the course but at the same time showing how the individual topics relate to the overall course.

Grading Information. According to studies by Becker and Calhoon (1999) and Doolittle and Siudzinski (2010), grading information on syllabi is important to students and instructors. Grading information can include the types of assessment and the assessment criteria as well as the actual grading scale (Appleby, 1994; Behnke & Miller, 1989; Doolittle & Siudzinski, 2010; Eberly et al., 2001; Hammons & Shock,1994;

Lowther et al., 1989; Marcis et al., 2005; Matejka & Kurke, 1994; Parkes, Fix & Harris, 2003 ; Parkes & Harris, 2002; Passman & Green, 2009; Seeman, 2010; Slattery & Carlson, 2005; Smith & Razzouk, 1993). A specific type of assessment tool – a grading rubric is also encouraged for learning centered courses (Grunert O'Brien et al., 2008). The rubrics for an assignment or all the assignments can be added to the syllabus. A few other areas that are important to grading and fits best in this category is academic honesty and academic conduct (Doolittle & Siudzinski, 2010; Eberly et al., 2001; Hammons & Shock, 1994Marcis et al., 2005; Passman & Green, 2009). If students are not conducting themselves appropriately in regards to classwork by cheating or plagiarism, they will have consequences related to the grade on the particular assignment, or perhaps failing the class or even expulsion. These academic policies or expectations relating to honesty and conduct are better expressed in a positive fashion and could be included in a section about student roles and responsibilities (Eberly et al., 2001; Grunert O'Brien et al., 2008).

Policy Information. Certain policies might be required by the department or institution, while other policies are up to the instructor if he or she wants to use them and how the policies will read. Doolittle and Siudzinski (2010) and McDonald et al. (2010) have indicated that policies are left out of syllabi though it is not clear if this is done on purpose or simply an oversight. The other side of this issue is when lots of policies are included in the syllabus thus causing "syllabus creep" (Singham, 2007, p. 55). Common department or institutional policies include student disability services policies (Doolittle & Lusk, 2007; Marcis et al., 2005) and plagiarism and incomplete policies (Davis, 1993; Doolittle & Lusk, 2007; Passman & Green, 2009; Seeman, 2010). These policies are not unusual and span beyond an individual course. The attendance policy for some

institutions might be a set standard but at others it is determined by individual instructors (Davis, 1993; Doolittle & Lusk, 2007; Doolittle & Siudzinski, 2010; Marcis et al., 2005; Passman & Green, 2009; Seeman, 2010).

Other policies are at the discretion of the instructor and are of great interest to students since they tend to affect their grades; these include extra credit, revision, makeup or late assignments, and other classroom management policies. The instructor will decide if the course will include extra credit (Hammons & Shock, 1994; Marcis et al., 2005; Matejka & Kurke, 1994), revision or redoing of assignments (Davis, 1993; Doolittle & Lusk, 2007; Doolittle & Siudzinski, 2010; Passman & Green, 2009; Marcis et al., 2005), and late assignments or makeup policies (Davis, 1993; Doolittle & Lusk, 2007; Doolittle & Siudzinski, 2010; Marcis et al., 2005; Passman & Green, 2009), but the literature suggests a policy is added to the syllabus clearly stating the details so not only the instructor can easily refer to them but so can the administration if a grade is appealed.

From a classroom management perspective, if an instructor has a certain expectation related to the classroom environment, it should be stated in the syllabus. These could include a number of certain classroom behaviors like the use of cell phones and ipods, or eating in class (Seeman, 2010). More recently instructors are upset with the use of Facebook during class unless it has relevance to the course. Lastly is the issue of classroom civility (Grunert O'Brien et al., 2008, p. 84). When diverse group of students come into a classroom, ideas and personalities might clash which is why the inclusion of civility would be important.

Miscellaneous Syllabi Components. Four components do not clearly fall into the other categories they include: (a) Instructors should consider providing space in the

syllabus for the student to record classmate contact information (Davis, 1993; Garavalia et al., 1999). This is part of that socialization process and is also practical information to have if the student misses class and needs to secure notes. (b) Instructors should consider including an actual contract at the end of the syllabi for students to sign (Matejka & Kurke, 1994; Garavalia et al., 1999) or a slightly different version would be "class ground rules" (Grunert O'Brien et al., 2008, p. 81) or classroom behaviors (Seeman, 2010). Focus on the importance of the syllabus content sets an expectation that students need to follow rules and policies. (c) Instructors should consider adding a copyright designation (Gifford, 2003) on their syllabi. Typically this would be more for the online or e-syllabi but would be acceptable on a paper version. This designation helps protect the instructor and a residual side effect is showing the student the importance of the content. (d) The instructor should consider adding a disclaimer at the end of the document indicating that the syllabus is tentative and subject to change. (Altman, 1989; Appleby, 1994; Behnke & Miller, 1989; Hammons & Shock, 1994). Since many consider the syllabus a binding contract, the disclaimer allows some flexibility to the instructor in case a student would appeal a grade or file a lawsuit.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore how instructors at a mid-sized Midwest four-year undergraduate private university view the purpose, structure, format and use of their course syllabi. In preparation, this chapter summarized a review of literature on the Structural Functionalism Theory specifically in higher education, purposes and functions of higher education syllabi, syllabi formats, syllabi components, and higher education accreditation in the United States.

Chapter Three – Methodology

Chapter Three provides an overview of the methodology that guided this study. The chapter provides a rationale for the quantitative approach and the corresponding philosophical assumptions. Next, the research questions are restated and the research setting and population are explained. Then, the survey instrument, the data collection procedures and the data analysis procedures are explained. The chapter concludes with information regarding design issues of the study.

Research / Methodological Approach

Epistemology is about understanding the different kinds of knowledge or meaning in the world – the kind that just exist without human consciousness (objectivism), the kind that is given to an object by a subject (subjectivism), or the kind that views meaning based on different realities (constructionism) (Crotty, 2003). For this research, the perspective used is objectivism, which deals with one reality and that meaning resides in the objects (Crotty, p. 5). The researcher can observe objectively and manipulate for the purpose of learning not for his or her own gain.

The theoretical perspective or worldview for this research is post-positivism. Post-positivism represents more of the traditional form of research or the scientific method (Creswell, 2009, p. 6).

Philosophical Assumptions

Creswell (2009) identifies a number of post-positivism assumptions, which include (1) knowledge is conjectural, (2) research is the process of making claims and then refining or abandoning some for other more strongly warranted, (3) data, evidence and rational considerations shape knowledge, (4) research seeks to develop relevant, true

statements that can serve to explain the situation or describe the causal relationship, and (5) being objective is an essential aspect of competent inquiry.

The quantitative methodology or research design is typically aligned with post-positivism due to the assumptions previous mentioned. Based on the purpose of the research and the specific research questions that explore instructors' views about syllabi purpose and design, the post-positivists approach to the quantitative methodology of survey research is appropriate.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to explore how instructors at a mid-sized Midwest four-year undergraduate private university view the purpose, structure, format and use of their course syllabi**.** Based on the purpose of this study, the following research questions were addressed:

1. How do instructors at a mid-sized Midwest private university view the purpose/function of their syllabi?
2. What structural components of a course syllabus do instructors at a mid-sized Midwest private university consider essential and useful?
3. What syllabus format (paper/online) do instructors at a mid-sized Midwest private university use?
4. How do instructors at a mid-sized Midwest private university use syllabi in their courses?

Research Design

Survey research is a process of collecting information by asking questions of a group of people in order to describe trends, attitudes or opinions of the population the

group members belong (Creswell, 2009; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006). The type of survey used for this research was a cross-sectional design where the data are to be gathered at a fixed point in time though it might take a number of days to complete (Fink, 2003). An advantage to survey research is the potential of generalizing the findings of the sample to the entire population (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006).

The data were collected through a 74-item questionnaire, which was self-administered by the respondents in a group setting. This means the questionnaire was distributed in a group setting or through a group administration process but the person completing the questionnaire read and responded individually and privately (Fowler, 2009). Advantages to this approach include the rapid turnaround time and the economy of design (Fowler, 2002). Group administration of surveys generally has high cooperation rates (Fowler, 2009).

Research Setting

The research setting was a mid-sized, Midwest four-year private undergraduate university with six schools or colleges including liberal arts and professional programs. The instructors of record are faculty who were assigned to each class for the purpose of official correspondence and grading responsibility. The instructors were from all categories of rank and tenure/non-tenure track status. They also included university staff who teach a regular or an occasional course.

The university provides a variety of faculty development sessions as part of their New Faculty Orientation in mid-August. The university's Academic Affairs Fellow - Faculty Development Programs explained that a session in new faculty orientation covers how a syllabus can be used to facility the student learning process as well as act like a

contract with our students (personal communication, September 26, 2011). This presentation covers basic components to include on a syllabus (contact information, office hours, course description, assigned texts, and outline of topics) and other components to help create a positive learning environment (course goals, grading criteria, academic integrity principles, and disability resources). The final slide of the presentation includes a list of 'other policies to consider' which includes food/drink policy, cell phone and laptop use policies, guidelines for civility and learner-appropriate behaviors. Faculty are not required to attend the session.

The university's faculty handbook and academic charter do not make reference to instructors' course syllabi. This decision has been left to the specific college, school, or department to regulate. Of the five colleges and schools at the institution, three have statements in their governance documents indicating that syllabi are required, one encourages the use of syllabi, and the remaining one only mentions that the attendance policy must be included in the syllabus but does not specifically state the syllabus is required. The Dean's offices for four of these groups collect the syllabi and retain them for a period ranging from a few years to indefinitely. All have specific requirements to include on the syllabus.

Participants and Sampling

The population group was all instructors of record (including both faculty and staff) who were teaching undergraduate courses in the fall semester of 2011. The Student Records Department provided the researcher with a list of all undergraduate courses for the fall semester and the corresponding instructors. Narrowing the list to only include one listing for each unique instructor name, the total number of instructors came to 352.

The population of 352 instructors was a manageable size so calculating a smaller sample to try to generalize to the entire population was not done. No purposeful exclusion of any instructors was done. The research study was already narrowed by surveying instructors from one institution who were teaching during the fall, 2011 semester. Instructors who were on sabbatical or otherwise not teaching in the fall were not counted. Even though the survey was provided to all of the identified population, a hundred percent response rate was not expected. While "no single response rate is considered standard" (Fink, 2003, p. 42), the higher the response rate, the greater potential to determine statistical significance in responses.

Data Collection Procedures

This section covers will cover access to the population, the survey instrument contents, and the pilot testing results.

Access to Population. Upon approval from the Institutional Review Board to proceed with the survey, the researcher contacted each college/school Dean's office to determine how each of the units structure meetings with their instructors (as an entire college/school or by department or both) and requested the name of the appropriate contact person about those meetings. The researcher called each contact person and requested time in their upcoming faculty meetings to do a group administration of the paper survey. Time was also requested for the First Year Seminar workshops conducted in August since some of the instructors for those courses are typically the ones who are university staff teaching a single course and those individuals are not necessarily connected with one of the schools or colleges.

The initial request was for 15 minutes to allow participants time to complete the survey. However, after administering the survey to two groups and realizing some of the departments had so few people in them, the researcher determined it best to just disseminate the surveys at the meetings and ask the participants to return their surveys through campus mail in the pre-addressed envelopes. This process maintained the anonymity of the participants and also made department chairs more willing to allow the researcher to distribute the surveys at the meetings.

Twenty-three groups were identified; they included five college/school wide meetings, 17 department meetings within the liberal arts and sciences and the First Year Seminar workshops. Of those 23 groups, the researcher was allowed to visit 19. The four remaining groups were not meeting in the two month span the researcher requested and one of those was a one person department and thus no department meeting ever takes place. Surveys were still distributed to the instructors of these four groups using campus mail. Also any instructors not present for their department meetings were provided a copy of the survey via campus mail. No additional reminders were sent.

At each college/school meeting, the researcher used a speaking script to explain the purpose of the survey, cover the research information sheet, provide directions for the survey and answer any questions. Included in the script was the request for individuals to participate only once and for all surveys to be returned whether or not they were completed. See Appendix A for the speaking script.

Survey Instrument. The survey questionnaire consisted of 74 items created specifically for this research. The question types included: 5 demographic, 6 series of side by side matrix format questions (totaling 56 items); 8 yes or no; 3

select responses, 1 fill-in, and 1 scale. Five of the side by side matrix format series questions included syllabus components identified in other syllabi surveys. See Appendix B for the survey cover letter and survey.

Pilot Testing. The researcher sought out five instructors and administrators from three other Midwest four-year private undergraduate universities for input on the survey instrument. The pilot test looked at question clarity, the amount of time to complete the survey, the preferred color scheme of the survey and any additional comments to help improve the instrument. Four respondents indicated the survey took 15 minutes to complete and another thought 10 minutes was sufficient. All indicated that color was not a big issue for them from being indifferent about it to saying color was nice but not essential. All provided layout suggestions and alternative wording for clarity on questions and directions.

Data Analysis Procedures

When the surveys were completed and returned, the data were cleaned. In the demographic questions (education level, assigned college/school/department, position designation), if the answer was marked as 'other' and a response was filled-in, a determination was made if the response remained in the 'other' category or placed in a more appropriate category. Questions left unanswered remained as blank. No returned surveys were excluded. Once any clarification was determined on the surveys, the data were entered into the statistical software, PASW Statistics 19® or more commonly known as SPSS, with the appropriate coding. Additionally, the responses to three open-ended questions as well as all written in comments on the survey were entered into an Excel file. The number of respondents was 126 out of 352 for a response rate of 36%.

Descriptive Statistics. A quantitative research design was employed for this study. A descriptive statistical analysis, including frequency counts, was used. As shown in Table 3.1, survey questions have been identified with their corresponding research question. Questions 1 through 5 were demographic types of information, which were meant to determine if a representative survey pool was obtained but only the college, school or department demographic is used in the results of this study.

Table 3.1

Survey Questions with Corresponding Research Questions

Survey Question	Survey Question Topic	Research Question
1	Gender	1, 2, 3, 4
2	Education Level	1, 2, 3, 4
3	College, School or Department	1, 2, 3, 4
4	# of Years Teaching	1, 2, 3, 4
5	Position Designation	1, 2, 3, 4
6-13	Syllabi Purpose	1, 4
14	Purposes Used in last 12 Months	1, 4
15	Syllabi Required	4
16	Syllabi copies collected	4
17	Syllabi material required	4
18-19	College/school syllabi templates	4
20	Where instructors learned to create syllabi	4
21	Department assistance/mentoring for syllabi creation	4
22	Has instructor requested assistance with syllabi creation	4
23a	Referring to syllabi	4
23b	Reasons to refer to syllabi	4
23c	How often refer to syllabi	4
24	Format of syllabi	3, 4
25	Has instructor taught online course	3, 4
26	Effect syllabi have on student learning	4
27-38	Instructor Information components	2, 4

39-55	Course information components	2, 4
56-61	Grading information components	2, 4
62-70	Policy information components	2, 4
71-74	Syllabus extra components	2, 4

Questions 6-13 and 27-74 were unique survey type questions; they were in a side-by-side matrix form which allowed the instructors to identify on one scale their perception of how "essential" a syllabi purpose or syllabi component was and on another scale how "useful" each were. Each scale is 1 to 5 with 1 being low and 5 being high.

Another group of data questions dealt with college or school information that resulted in yes or no answers (Questions 15-19, 21-22). The descriptive statistics for this group were raw numbers and percentages. Since these questions were about the specific college or school, the results were separated by the responses in Question 3 to determine college/school results as well. The results revealed instructor familiarity with general department or college policies and procedures related to syllabi.

Question 23 was a three-part open-ended question about respondent use of syllabi during their course. These qualitative responses were entered in a spreadsheet and separated by similar terms. The final categories were then counted for frequency data.

Additional information was collected from the colleges and schools. Each college and school were asked to explain their policies about requiring syllabi, collecting syllabi, requiring specific material on syllabi, templates, and mentoring. Also obtained was the institution's official full-time faculty demographic summary for the fall 2011 semester to determine if the survey respondents were proportionate by gender, college/school affiliation, and position designation.

Design Issues

The survey questionnaire was created for this research study and was not tested for validity and reliability. However, previous syllabus design research has been conducted in "three previous themes, (a) what components do faculty include within their syllabi, (b) how do faculty and students perceive the syllabus, and (c) how do syllabi function within specific content areas" (Doolittle & Lusk, 2003, p. 64) and a number of questions in this survey's content has been included in previous studies. The studies are identified with asterisk in Appendix C - Syllabi Components Citations.

Delimitations.

This research involved only one higher education institution located in the United States Midwest region. Other institutions might have other processes or procedures relating to syllabi. The research was only conducted for one semester using only instructors teaching at least one undergraduate course during that specific semester. Some instructors might not have been teaching that particular semester.

Limitations.

Syllabi are only one aspect of instruction. Instructors might share certain information verbally or in other documents instead of syllabi.

The survey data was collected in a cross-sectional design in that the surveys were distributed at different departmental or college level meetings within a month and a half. The respondents were asked to return their surveys within 10 days of receiving it. This only captured the instructor's perceptions at that one moment.

The research focused on the use of a survey instrument. Additional information might have been discovered if multiple research approaches were used such as conducting interviews with instructors or focus groups. Since this was an exploratory study, a survey was the most appropriate way to determine instructors' perceptions on the topic of syllabi.

The researcher had difficulties accessing the population – not all chairs were willing to have the researcher in or were not having department meetings. The gatekeeping maneuvers were not anticipated since this was an academic institution and those being asked know the difficulty in completing research. Cooperation was anticipated but not surprising that there was resistance as barriers to entry exists with all populations.

No definitions or explanations were given in the survey as to what was meant by essential and useful or any of the purposes or component items. It is not clear by the survey if the lack of definitions caused any specific issues. Many of the components and purposes were marked the same or similar on the 'essential' and 'useful' scales and the mean scores reflected that. Why they scored the items that way is not known nor can it be assumed it was in error. Perhaps they saw no difference in the terms essential or useful or they were not sure from what perspective they were responding – their own as an instructor or what they think students want. A component might be useful and essential to instructor but neither for a student. Administrators and accreditation organizations might have even different perspectives and want certain items that 'look' good on a syllabus such as outcomes and detailed assignments that specifically show how the assignments related to the outcomes. But the instructor might want to include them or

prefers to provide that information in some other fashion such as verbally explain in class or provide a different document type of assignment sheet.

Just because instructors rate and view the different purposes and syllabus components as ‘essential’ or ‘useful’ does not mean their actions match. Since the study did not review the instructors’ syllabi, discrepancies might exist between instructors’ views and actions.

This study did not include the students’ perspective of how instructors at this particular institution use their syllabi and the components that are in them. The study included survey research and with surveys there is always the chance for response bias.

Summary

Chapter Three provided an overview of the methodological approach for the research as quantitative through an objectivism and post-positivist worldview. The chapter provided a rationale for the quantitative approach and the corresponding philosophical assumptions and the survey research method. Next, the research setting and population were explained, and then the survey instrument, the data collection procedures and the data analysis procedures were presented. The chapter concluded with information regarding design issues of the study.

Chapter Four presents results for the data analyses. Frequencies and descriptive data were reported for each of the survey questions.

Chapter Four – Results

This chapter provides the results of the data analyses gathered through a survey of instructors at a mid-sized Midwest four-year undergraduate private university in the fall semester of 2011. Additional information was gathered from the colleges and schools about syllabi related policies and procedures as well as the institution's full-time faculty demographic summary for the semester**.**

Survey Demographic Summary

The surveys were distributed to 352 instructors over a two month period and the number of completed surveys returned was 126 which equal a response rate of 36%. As shown in Table 4.1, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences had the largest percentage of respondents with 51.6%. The next largest group was the School of Education at 15.1% followed closely by the College of Business and Public Administration with 14.3%. Some instructors may have taught classes for multiple colleges or schools but all responses indicated one college, school, or department.

Table 4.1

Frequency and Percentage of Survey Respondents by College/School

	Respondents	
Colleges and Schools (*n*=126)	Frequency	Percentage
Liberal Arts and Science	65	51.6
Business and Public Administration	18	14.3
Journalism	8	6.3
Pharmacy	11	8.7
Education	19	15.1
Library	3	2.4
First Year Seminar	1	.8
Other	1	.8

As shown on Table 4.2, just over half of the respondents identified as female (51.6%) and 46% identified as male, this left 3 respondents who did not answer this question. The number of female instructors (16.7%) with a Master's degree was greater than male instructors (8.7%), while male instructors (36.5%) with doctorate degrees (PhD, EdD, PharmD, JD) outnumbered female instructors (34.9%) by two. The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences had the largest groups of respondents for both men (26.2%) and women (24.6%). The College of Business and Public Administration had 9.5% men and 8.4% women responding while the School of Education had almost the opposite with 10.3% of women and 4% of men responding. The majority of respondents held tenured faculty status (46.8%) leaving 23.6% as tenure-track status, 15.1% as adjunct faculty status, 6.3% as visiting faculty/instructor status, and 5.6% as university lecture or other status.

Table 4.2

Frequency and Percentage of Survey Respondents Demographics

	Frequencies, *n*		Percentage, %	
Variables	Male	Female	Male	Female
Gender (*n* = 123)	58	65	46.0	51.6
Educational Background (*n* = 122)				
Masters	11	21	8.7	16.7
PhD/EdD/PharmD/JD	46	44	36.5	34.9
College/School/Department Affiliation (n = 123)				
Liberal Arts and Science	33	31	26.2	24.6
Business and Public Administration	12	6	9.5	4.8
Journalism	2	6	1.6	4.8

Pharmacy	5	5	4.0	4.0
Education	5	13	4.0	10.3
Library	1	2	0.8	1.6
First Year Seminar	0	1	0.0	0.8
Other	0	1	0.0	0.8
Position Designation (*n* = 123)				
Tenured faculty	29	30	23.0	23.8
Tenured track faculty	14	16	11.1	12.7
Visiting faculty/instructor	3	5	2.4	4.0
Adjunct faculty/instructor	9	10	7.1	7.9
University Lecturer	1	0	0.8	0.0
Other	2	4	1.6	3.2

Based on the institution's published demographics, which consist of only full-time instructors, male instructors made up 51.5% compared to 48.5% of female instructors for the fall of 2011. As reported in Table 4.3, those who responded to the survey had a similar split, but the percentages switched to 51.7% female and 48.3% male. The percentage of full-time instructor survey respondents by college/school was not as proportionately distributed as the institution's demographics. The College of Liberal Arts and Science response rate created percentages similar that of the institution's population percentage by college/school and gender. However the other colleges and schools response rates by college/school or gender were not as similar. The School of Journalism had full-time faculty at 5% and the survey respondents at 6.8%. The College Business and Public Administration had full-time faculty at 18.7% and the survey respondents at 15.3%. School of Education had 8.6% for full-time faculty and 15.2% for survey respondents while the College of Pharmacy had 13.7% for full-time faculty and 8.4% for survey respondents. The full-time faculty percentages for the institution do not include

part-time faculty, which could be visiting instructors, adjuncts and staff teaching first year seminars.

Table 4.3

Percentage of Full-Time Faculty and Survey Respondents by Gender and College/School

	Percentage of Full Time Faculty in the population (*n* = 257)		Percentage of Full Time Faculty Survey Respondents (*n* = 118)	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Liberal Arts and Science	27.2	26.8	28.0	26.3
Business and Public Administration	14.0	4.7	10.2	5.1
Education	3.5	5.1	4.2	11.0
Journalism	2.3	2.7	1.7	5.1
Pharmacy	5.1	8.6	4.2	4.2
Total	52.1	47.9	48.3	51.7

As displayed in Table 4.4, two-thirds (67%) of the instructor respondents have been teaching for less than 16 years, while one-third of the instructors have been teaching more than 16 years or more. Even though the number of female respondents (*n* = 46) is slightly more for the category of 16 years or less than males (*n* = 36), the number of male respondents (*n* = 22) who have taught for 16 or more years is slightly more than females (*n* = 19). The number of female respondents (*n* = 15) who have taught for five or less years is greater than males (*n* = 9) in the same category.

Table 4.4

Percentage of Respondents by Years of Teaching Experience and Gender

	Gender			
Years	Female (%)	Male (%)	Not Identified	Total (%)
0-5	15 (23.1)	9 (15.5)	1	25 (19.8)
6-10	17 (26.2)	15 (25.9)	1	33 (26.2)
11-15	14 (21.5)	12 (20.7)	0	26 (20.6)
16-20	8 (12.3)	6 (10.3)	1	15 (11.9)
21-25	5 (7.7)	8 (13.8)	0	13 (10.3)
26-30	3 (4.6)	4 (6.9)	0	7 (5.6)
31-35	2 (3.1)	3 (5.2)	0	5 (4.0)
36+	1 (1.5)	1 (1.7)	0	2 (1.6)
Total	65	58	3	126

Research Question 1 – The Purpose of Syllabi

The survey provided a list of eight purposes for using syllabi such as a communication mechanism or planning tool and the respondents were to identify on a 1(low) to 5(high) scale their perception of how ‘essential’ and ‘useful’ each syllabi purpose is. The researcher used both terms on the survey to avoid assumptions that because a purpose may be determined essential at a certain level that it would be equally useful or vice versa. As shown in Table 4.5, instructors tended to rate each purpose differently from the other, but when determining if a particular purpose was ‘essential’ or ‘useful,’ the values were usually similar. The purpose as a Communication Mechanism rated the highest for ‘essential’ followed by Course Plan for Student but Course Plan for Students was rated the highest for ‘useful’ by a small margin over the purpose of a

Contract. The purpose of Scholarship was rated the lowest for both 'essential' and 'useful.'

Table 4.5

Means and Standard Deviations for the Eight Purposes of Syllabi

	Essential			Useful		
	n	*M*	*SD*	*n*	*M*	*SD*
Communication	125	4.58	.720	123	4.16	.961
Course Plan	124	4.38	.852	124	4.27	.903
Contract	126	4.29	.920	122	4.26	.880
Planning Tool	125	4.22	.980	125	4.37	.828
Artifact	124	3.82	1.098	122	3.69	1.207
Teaching Tool/Resource	125	3.08	1.182	124	3.06	1.171
Socialization	123	2.76	1.248	123	2.76	1.222
Scholarship	123	1.78	.954	121	1.94	1.142

Scale: 1 = low to 5 = high

As displayed in Table 4.6a, instructors indicated that the syllabi purposes they considered to be 'essential' (rating 5 on the survey is the highest rating of essential and a 1 rating is low) was a syllabus used as a Communication Mechanism (69.6%); a Course Plan for Students (57.3%); a Contract (55.6%); and a Planning Tool for Instructor (52%). The syllabus purpose that had the most in the 1 rating as low was Scholarship.

Table 4.6a

Frequencies and Percentage for Rating on the Essential Scale for Syllabi Purposes

	Rating on the Essential Scale					
	n	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5 (%)
Communication	125	1 (0.8)	0 (0.0)	11 (8.8)	26 (20.8)	87 (69.6)
Planning Tool	125	1 (0.8)	8 (6.4)	19 (15.2)	32 (25.6)	65 (52.0)
Course Plan	124	0 (0.0)	6 (4.8)	12 (9.7)	35 (28.2)	71 (57.3)
Teaching Tool /	125	13 (10.4)	24 (19.2)	47 (37.6)	22 (17.6)	19 (15.2)

Resource						
Artifact	124	3 (2.4)	14 (11.3)	27 (21.8)	38 (30.6)	42 (33.9)
Contract	126	0 (0.0)	6 (4.8)	22 (17.5)	28 (22.2)	70 (55.6)
Socialization	123	25 (20.3)	27 (22.0)	34 (27.6)	26 (21.1)	11 (8.9)
Scholarship	123	63 (51.2)	31 (25.2)	24 (19.5)	3 (2.4)	2 (1.6)

Scale: 1 = low to 5 = high

In Table 4.6b, a slightly different frequency order can be seen for what the instructors identified to be 'useful' – a Planning Tool for Instructor (56%); a Course Plan for Students (51.6%); a Contract (51.6%); and a Communication Mechanism (47.2%). Again the syllabus purpose ranked most in the 1 rating for low was Scholarship.

Table 4.6b

Frequencies and Percentage for Rating on the Useful Scale for Syllabi Purposes

	Ratings on the Useful Scale					
	n	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5 (%)
Communication	123	1 (0.8)	7 (5.7)	21 (17.1)	36 (29.3)	58 (47.2)
Planning Tool	125	0 (0.0)	4 (3.2)	16 (12.8)	35 (28.0)	70 (56.0)
Course Plan	124	0 (0.0)	7 (5.6)	17 (13.7)	36 (29.0)	64 (57.6)
Teaching Tool / Resource	124	15 (12.1)	19 (15.3)	51 (41.1)	22 (17.7)	17 (13.7)
Artifact	122	6 (4.9)	17 (13.9)	26 (21.3)	33 (27.0)	40 (32.8)
Contract	122	0 (0.0)	4 (3.3)	23 (18.9)	32 (26.2)	63 (51.6)
Socialization	123	24 (19.5)	25 (20.3)	42 (34.1)	20 (16.3)	12 (9.8)
Scholarship	121	60 (49.6)	24 (19.8)	27 (22.3)	4 (3.3)	6 (5.0)

Scale: 1 = low to 5 = high

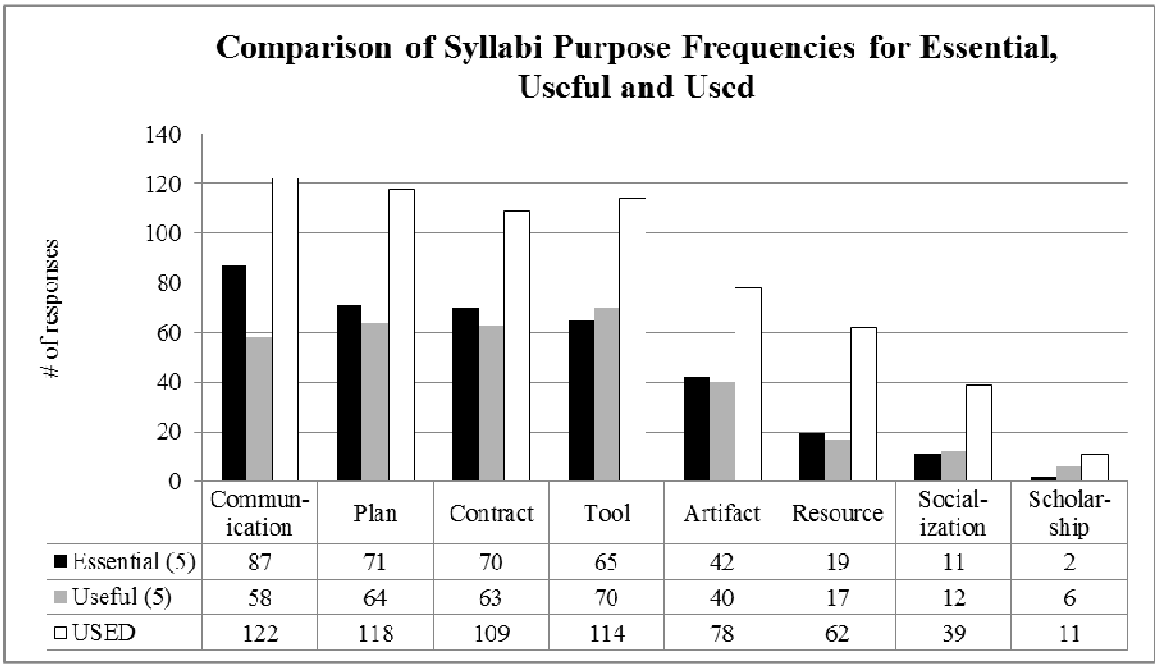
When asked which purposes the instructors incorporate into their syllabi, the survey instructions were to identify all that apply. Again the same four syllabi purposes were at the top but in yet a different order. The instructors indicated they 'used' the syllabus as a Communication Mechanism the most with 96.8% instructors selecting it.

The next purpose used was as a Course Plan for Students (93.7%) followed closely with as a Planning Tool for Instructors (90.5%) and as a Contract (86.5%).

As shown in Figure 4.1, the 'essential' and 'useful' frequencies include the responses for rating 5 (highest on the scale) on the scale by category of purposes. The 'used' category was not based on a scale response but calculated by the number of times instructors selected the specific purpose. The top four purposes selected as highest on the scales for 'essential' and 'useful' and also the most responses for being 'used' by the instructors were Communication Mechanism, a Course Plan for Student, a Contract, and a Planning Tool for Instructor. Consistently the purpose that ranks the lowest is Scholarship.

Figure 4.1

Comparison of Syllabi Purpose Frequencies for Essential, Useful and Used



	Commun-ication	Plan	Contract	Tool	Artifact	Resource	Social-ization	Scholar-ship
Essential (5)	87	71	70	65	42	19	11	2
Useful (5)	58	64	63	70	40	17	12	6
USED	122	118	109	114	78	62	39	11

The survey did not include definitions for the different syllabi purposes and a few respondents indicated they did not know what socialization and scholarship meant in the context of the syllabi purpose.

Research Question 2 – Syllabi Components. The survey provided a list of 48 questions divided into five groups of questions regarding components of a syllabus (see Appendix B for the survey layout for the components). The five groups were Instructor Information, Course Information, Grading Information, Policy Information and Syllabus Extras. The respondents were to identify on a 1 (low) to 5 (high) scale their perception of how 'essential' and 'useful' each syllabi component is. Basic information about the instructor (name, phone number, email address, office location and office hours) and the course (course name and number, department, semester/year, credit hours, day/time and location of course) were considered to be typical and not included in the study.

Instructor Information Components. The instructor information section of the survey consisted of 12 different components questions. The instructors tended to rate each component of instructor information differently from the others but when determining if a particular component was 'essential' or 'useful', the 'essential' and 'useful' ratings were usually similar as seen with the mean scores in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7

Means and Standard Deviation for Instructor Information Components

	Essential			Useful		
	n	*M*	*SD*	*n*	*M*	*SD*
Expectations of Students	124	4.64	0.667	122	4.54	0.706
What Students can Expect	124	3.79	1.171	123	3.88	1.068
Encourage Participation	124	3.64	1.271	122	3.70	1.201

Encourage Students to Ask	124	3.76	1.136	122	3.79	1.122
Methods of Instruction	122	3.42	1.259	121	3.52	1.191
Evaluation from students	122	3.00	1.601	120	3.07	1.549
Teaching Tools	120	3.33	1.265	118	3.42	1.194
Tips on How to Succeed in Course	123	3.28	1.250	122	3.56	1.143
Philosophy of Teaching	124	2.68	1.329	122	2.97	1.342
Assumptions about students	120	2.49	1.328	118	2.58	1.373
Cell Phone Number	124	1.56	1.157	122	1.98	1.339
Social Networking ID	124	1.19	0.616	123	1.46	0.908

Scale: 1 = low to 5 = high

As seen in Table 4.8, almost three-fourths of the respondents (74.2%) considered the syllabus component Instructor Expectations of the Students to be ‘essential’ (rating of 5 on the essential scale of the survey). The next highest response was much lower; 34.7% of the respondents considered the component What Students Can Expect from the Instructor to be ‘essential’ (rating of 5) and 63.7% with a rating of 4 and 5. Instructor Encouragement for Class Participation on the syllabus was rated a 5 by 29.8% or 62.9% with a rating of 4 and 5; and Instructor Encouragement for Students to Ask for Help on the syllabus was rated a 5 by 28.7% or 67.7% with a rating 4 and 5.

Again, the top ‘useful’ component was Instructor Expectations of the Students’ at 65.6% (rating of 5). The next highest response was 33.3% for What Students Can Expect From the Instructor’ (rating of 5) and 68.3% (rating of 4 and 5). The next two components then switch if the rating was based just on a rating of 5 or if it is a rating of 4 and 5. The component Instructor Encouragement for Students to Ask for Help had 32% at a rating of 5 and Instructor Encouragement for Class Participation had 29.3%. But if the percentage were calculated for ratings of 4 and 5 then Instructor Encourage for Class Participation had 65% and Instructor Encouragement for Students to Ask for Help only had 64.8%. The components Instructor Cell Phone Number’ and Instructor Social

Networking IDs were both considered low for being ‘essential’ or ‘useful.’ Instructor Social Networking IDs received 1(.8%) rating of a 5 for being ‘essential’ and 1 (.8%) rating of a 5 for being ‘useful’ while receiving 111 (89.5%) ratings of a 1 for being ‘essential’ and 93 (75.6%) for being ‘useful.’ Instructor Cell Phone Number received 5.6% rating 5 for being ‘essential’ and 7.4% rating 5 for being ‘useful.’ See Table A.2 in Appendix D for frequency and percentage values for all ratings on Instructor Information.

Table 4.8

Frequencies and Percentages for Rating 4 & 5 for the Top Four Instructor Information Components

	Essential Scale			Useful Scale		
		Ratings (%)			Ratings (%)	
	n	4 (%)	5 (%)	*n*	4 (%)	5 (%)
Expectations of Students	124	19 (15.3)	92 (74.2)	122	29 (23.8)	80 (65.6)
What Students can Expect	124	36 (28.6)	43 (34.1)	123	43 (34.1)	41 (32.5)
Encourage Participation	124	41 (33.1)	37 (29.8)	122	49 (39.5)	36 (29.3)
Encourage Students to Ask	124	49 (39.5)	35 (28.2)	122	40 (32.8)	39 (32.0)

Scale: 1 = low to 5 = high

Course Information Components. The course information section of the survey consisted of 17 different components questions. The instructors tended to rate each component of course information differently from the others but when determining if a particular component was ‘essential’ or ‘useful’, the ‘essential’ and ‘useful’ ratings were usually similar as seen with the mean scores in Table 4.9

Table 4.9

Means and Standard Deviation for Course Information Components

	Essential			Useful		
	n	*M*	*SD*	*n*	*M*	*SD*
Textbooks & ISBN	124	4.65	0.767	122	4.57	0.813
Requirements - Homework, etc.	122	4.64	0.717	122	4.58	0.770
Calendar/outline/assignments	121	4.62	0.809	119	4.66	0.730
Objectives	123	4.59	0.722	121	4.44	0.815
Goals	123	4.56	0.726	121	4.42	0.814
Description	124	4.44	0.829	122	4.22	0.966
Outcomes	122	4.15	1.104	120	4.07	1.106
Course Content	120	3.94	1.190	120	3.87	1.229
Materials (Handouts/supplies)	123	3.72	1.315	121	3.83	1.247
Webpage/online presence	121	3.63	1.317	121	3.83	1.261
Prerequisites	122	3.17	1.589	121	3.24	1.522
Library Resources	121	3.03	1.217	121	3.17	1.241
Suppose Services Available	122	2.98	1.324	122	3.24	1.330
Suggested Reading outside of class	122	2.81	1.229	121	3.09	1.285
Guide for studying outside of class	120	2.75	1.252	120	3.04	1.273
Drop date	122	2.13	1.396	122	2.67	1.457
Graphic or cognitive map	117	1.86	1.224	116	2.25	1.363

Scale: 1 = low to 5 = high

The components can be grouped into three categories – the top five, the middle six, and the bottom six. The same five course components were ranked at the top regardless if the item was as ‘essential’ with a ranking of 5 or ranking of 4 and 5 as well as ‘useful’ with a ranking of 5 or ranking of 4 and 5. As shown in Table 4.10, the top two ‘essential’ components for the course information were Textbook(s) & ISBN with 77.4% rating of 5 on the ‘essential’ scale and Calendar/Outline/Assignments with a 76.9% rating of 5. With just a rating of 5, the components switched places on the ‘useful’ scale with Calendar/Outline/Assignments with 76.5% and Textbook(s) & ISBN with 71.3%. The next three components were the same order rank for both the ‘essential’ and ‘useful’

scales with ratings of 5. These were Requirements – Homework, Etc. with 73.8% for 'essential' and 69.7% for 'useful, Objectives with 69.9% for 'essential' and 60.3% for 'useful', and Goals with 66.7% for 'essential' and 58.7% for 'useful.' However, when the ratings of 4 and 5 were combined, the top 5 changed order from the first listings and also changed between 'essential' and 'useful.' For the 'essential,' the course component of Requirements – Homework, etc. was the highest with 93.5% followed by Objectives and Goals both with 91.2% then Textbook(s) & ISBN (91.1%), and Calendar/Outline/Assignments (90.1%). For the combined ratings of 4 and 5 on the 'useful' scale, again Requirements – Homework, Etc. was at the top with 92.7% closely followed by Calendar/Outline/Assignments with 92.5%. Those were followed by Textbook(s) & ISBN (89.3%), Goals (86.8%) and Objectives (86.7%).

Table 4.10

Frequencies and Percentages for Rating 4&5 for the Top Five Course Information Components

	Essential Scale			Useful Scale		
		Rating (%)			Rating (%)	
	n	4 (%)	5 (%)	*n*	4 (%)	5 (%)
Textbooks & ISBN	124	17 (13.7)	96 (77.4)	122	22 (18.0)	87 (71.3)
Calendar/outline/assignments	121	16 (13.2)	93 (76.9)	119	19 (16.0)	91 (76.5)
Requirements - Homework, etc.	122	24 (19.7)	90 (73.8)	122	28 (23.0)	85 (69.7)
Objectives	123	27 (22.0)	86 (69.9)	121	32 (26.4)	73 (60.3)
Goals	123	31 (25.2)	82 (66.7)	121	34 (28.1)	71 (58.7)

Scale: 1 = low to 5 = high

The middle six course components are ranked in the same order by the 'essential' scale ratings regardless if it is raw numbers or mean scores as previously shown in Table

4.9. The order from higher to lower ranking is: Description, Outcomes, Course Content, Material (Handouts/supplies), Webpage/Online Presence, and Prerequisite. The same middle course components would rank slightly different if done by the 'useful' scale. It is in the middle section that some of the components have higher 'useful' scores than 'essential' scores. The specific raw numbers and percentages are available in Appendix D in Table A.2.

The same six course components were ranked at the bottom regardless if the item was as 'essential' with a ranking of 5 or ranking of 4 and 5 as well as 'useful' with a ranking of 5 or ranking of 4 and 5. These bottom six included Support Services Available, Library Resources, Drop Date, Suggested Reading Outside of Class, Guide for Studying Outside of Class, and Graphic or Cognitive Map. Consistently the lowest rating in this category was the Graphic or Cognitive Map. Only 7 (6%) instructors ranked this component with a 5 rating as 'essential' and only 11 (9.5%) with a 5 rating as 'useful.' On the other end of the spectrum, 68 (58.1%) instructors gave the same component a 1 rating as 'essential' and 52 (44.8%) with a 1 rating as 'useful.' A few instructors also placed a question mark next to this component on the survey. See Table A.3 in Appendix D for frequency and percentage values for all ratings on Course Information. In the bottom six course components all of the 'useful' scores were higher than their corresponding 'essential' scores.

Grading Information Components. The grading information section of the survey consisted of six different components questions. The instructors tended to rate each component of grading information differently from the others but when determining

if a particular component was ‘essential’ or ‘useful,’ the ‘essential’ and ‘useful’ ratings were usually similar as seen with the mean scores in Table 4.11.

Table 4.11

Means and Standard Deviations for Grading Information Components

	Essential			Useful		
	n	*M*	*SD*	*n*	*M*	*SD*
Academic Honesty	125	4.71	0.749	123	4.28	1.135
Grading Scale	125	4.56	0.837	123	4.46	0.934
Academic Conduct	125	4.53	0.819	123	4.16	1.112
Assessment Criteria	125	4.22	1.168	123	4.28	1.044
Student Role & Responsibility	125	3.95	1.170	123	3.86	1.169
Feedback/progress information	124	3.19	1.352	123	3.41	1.280

Scale: 1 = low to 5 = high

As shown in Table 4.12, the top two ‘essential’ components for the grading information were Academic Honesty with 82.4% rating of 5 on the ‘essential’ scale and Grading Scale with 72% rating of 5. With just a rating of 5, the components switch places on the ‘useful’ scale with Grading Scale with 68.3% and Academic Honesty with 64.2%. The next two components also switched rank for between the ‘essential’ and ‘useful’ scales with ratings of 5. These were Academic Conduct with 68% for ‘essential’ and 53.7% for ‘useful and Assessment Criteria with 60.8% for ‘essential’ and 58.5% for ‘useful.’

Table 4.12

Frequencies and Percentages for Rating 4 & 5 for the Top Four Grading Information Components

	Essential Scale			Useful Scale		
		Rating (%)			Rating (%)	
	n	4 (%)	5 (%)	*n*	4 (%)	5 (%)
Academic Honesty	125	14 (11.2)	103 (82.4)	123	18 (14.6)	79 (64.2)
Grading Scale	125	21 (16.8)	90 (72.0)	123	20 (16.3)	84 (68.3)
Academic Conduct	125	27 (21.6)	85 (68.0)	123	28 (22.8)	66 (53.7)
Assessment Criteria	125	19 (15.2)	76 (60.8)	123	28 (22.8)	72 (58.5)

Scale: 1 = low to 5 = high

The lowest grading component on the ‘essential’ and ‘useful’ scales was Course Feed – When Will Student Receive Progress Information. Twenty-six (21%) of the respondents rated it as ‘essential’ at a rating of 5 and 31 (25.2%) ‘useful.’ However, the highest responses were not in rating 1, but rating 3. Thirty (24.2%) of the respondents rated the Feedback component as a rating of 3 or neutral on the ‘essential’ scale and 34 (27.6%) on the ‘useful’ scale. See Table A.4 in Appendix D for frequency and percentage values for all ratings on Grading Information.

Policy Information Components. The policy information section of the survey consisted of nine different components questions. The same four policy components were ranked at the top regardless if it was as ‘essential’ with a ranking of 5 (the highest ranking) as well as ‘useful’ with a ranking of 5. The instructors tended to rate each component of policy information differently from the others but when determining if a particular component was ‘essential’ or ‘useful’, the ‘essential’ and ‘useful’ ratings were usually similar as seen with the mean scores in Table 4.13.

Table 4.13

Means and Stanard Deviation for Policy Information Components

	Essential			Useful		
	n	*M*	*SD*	*N*	*M*	*SD*
Plagiarism/Cheating	125	4.66	0.843	123	4.41	1.086
Disability Service	123	4.41	1.101	121	4.26	1.109
Attendance	124	4.33	1.080	121	4.19	1.120
Makeup & Late Assignments	124	4.29	1.042	120	4.21	1.076
Classroom Management	124	3.94	1.277	122	3.85	1.238
Civility in Discourse	124	3.72	1.359	124	3.65	1.369
Revision or Redoing	121	3.36	1.544	117	3.40	1.433
Incompletes	123	3.38	1.479	120	3.47	1.432
Extra Credit	122	2.72	1.638	120	2.91	1.572

Scale: 1 = low to 5 = high

As shown in Table 4.14, the top four ‘essential’ components for the policy information were Plagiarism/Cheating with 79.2% rating of 5 on the ‘essential’ scale, Disability Services with 71.5%, Attendance with 64.5% and Makeup & Late Assignments with 58.1%. The four components had the same order on the ‘useful’ scale with a ranking of 5; they were Plagiarism/Cheating with 69.1% rating of 5 Disability Services with 62.8% Attendance with 57% and Makeup & Late Assignments with 55.8%. See Table A.4 in Appendix D for frequency and percentage values for all ratings on Policy Information.

Table 4.14

Frequencies and Percentages for Rating 4 & 5 for the Top Four Policy Information Components

	Essential Scale			Useful Scale		
		Rating (%)			Rating (%)	
	n	4 (%)	5 (%)	*n*	4(%)	5 (%)
Plagiarism/Cheating	125	18 (14.4)	99 (79.2)	123	21 (17.1)	85 (69.1)
Disability Service	123	14 (11.4)	88 (71.5)	121	15 (12.4)	76 (62.8)
Attendance	124	19 (15.3)	80 (64.5)	121	21 (17.4)	69 (57.0)
Makeup & Late Assignments	124	30 (24.2)	72 (58.1)	120	25 (20.8)	67 (55.8)

Scale: 1 = low to 5 = high

The lowest policy component on the ‘essential’ and ‘useful’ scales was Extra Credit. Thirty-one (25.4%) of the respondents rated it as ‘essential’ at a rating of 5 and 29 (24.2%) ‘useful.’ The highest responses were in the rating 1. Forty-seven (38.5%) of the respondents rated the Extra Credit component as a rating of 1 or low on the ‘essential’ scale and 38 (31.7%) on the ‘useful’ scale.

Syllabus Extras Components. The syllabus extras section of the survey consisted of four different components questions. Only one of the components was rated as being ‘essential’ or ‘useful’ which was Disclaimer On the Syllabus with 53.7% saying it was ‘essential’ on a ranking of 5 and 49.6% saying it was ‘useful’ on a ranking of 5. As shown in Table 4.15, the other three had mean scores of 1.5 to 2.2 which is a low rating on both the ‘essential’ and ‘useful’ scales. See Table A.5 in Appendix D for frequency and percentage values for all ratings on Syllabus Extra Components.

Table 4.15

Syllabus Extras Components

	Essential			Useful		
	n	*M*	*SD*	*n*	*M*	*SD*
Disclaimer	123	3.8	1.501	121	3.74	1.459
Contacts	122	1.7	1.089	120	2.15	1.400
Copyright	122	1.8	1.145	119	2.13	1.359
Contracts	123	1.5	0.853	122	1.93	1.234

Scale: 1 = low to 5 = high

Research Question 3 – Syllabi Formats

The survey asked what format the instructors provided syllabi in the last 12 months. As shown in Table 4.16, the Hybrid – Paper & Online format type had the most responses with 47.6%. Paper Format received 19% and the Online Versions (web, static and interactive) had 28.6%. The comments added to this section as a Hybrid included - Blackboard or PDF. Only 5.6% indicated they offer an online interactive syllabus.

Table 4.16

Frequencies and Percentage for Syllabi Format Types Used, n = 126

Format Types	Number of Responses, *n*	Percentage, %
Hybrid – paper & online	60	47.6
Paper Only	24	19.0
Online Web	17	13.5
Online Static	12	9.5
Online Interactive	7	5.6
Varies	6	4.8

As a follow-up question about the syllabus format, the instructors were asked if they have ever taught a course online. Of the 126 respondents, 42.1% or 53 have taught online. This question was to help add clarity to the question about syllabi format and specifically the online version. Instructors who have taught online courses would have had to provide a syllabus in some other format than paper.

Research Question 4 – The Use of Syllabi

The survey's fourth question asked how instructors use syllabi in their course. Since this study relied on the instructors to self-report about their use of syllabi, several pieces of different information were gathered and used to try to answer the question. They were asked (1) reasons they referred to the syllabus, (2) what purposes for syllabi that they viewed as essential and useful, (3) what syllabi related requirements their college or school had, (5) any influences they might have regarding syllabi creation, (5) what syllabi format they use, (6) what their overall impression about syllabi effectiveness, and (7) what syllabi components they viewed as essential and useful.

(1) Referring to the Syllabus. The survey included a three part open-ended question on instructors referring to syllabi. The first part asked the respondents if they referred to the syllabus after the first session. Of the 126 respondents, 124 (98.4%) indicated they do refer to the syllabus after the first session. The second part asked the respondents what reasons they refer to the syllabi. Most of them (121 or 96%) identified items they refer to during the course syllabus. Ninety-four (75.8%) refer to Calendar/Schedule/Assignments, 26 (20.6%) refer to Policies, and 14 (11.1%) refer to Grading. Another term that was written in frequently was Reminder with 26 responses or 20.6%. Some responses indicated more specifically what items were the focus of the

reminder such as reminder about assignments, due dates, and policies but they were all coded as Reminder. The third part asked the respondents how often they referred to the syllabus during the course. As shown in Table 4.17, a variety of terms were used but 56 (44.4%) instructors indicated they refer to the syllabus at least once a week or more.

Table 4.17

Frequencies and Percentages of How Often Instructors Refer to Syllabi During a Course

	Frequency	%
No response; none; not sure; just at the beginning	5	4.0
Depends; whenever an assignment is due; as needed to clarify; occasional/periodical	8	6.3
Couple times a term; 2-3 times	20	15.9
3-5 times; a few; several 4-5 per month	25	19.8
Every 2 weeks; 6-7 times per term; 7-8 times	12	9.5
1+ times a week	22	17.5
Most classes; often by not every; very often; often as needed; every few class meeting	10	7.9
Every class	24	19.0
Total	126	

(2) Purposes of Syllabi. As mentioned in the results for Research Question 1, instructors indicated that the syllabi purposes they considered to be ‘essential’ (rating 5 on the survey) was a syllabus used as a Communication Mechanism (69.6%); a Course Plan for Students (57.3%); a Contract (55.6%); and a Planning Tool for Instructor (52%). The same syllabi purposes were identified to be ‘useful’ but in a slightly different

frequency order – a Planning Tool for Instructor (56%); a Course Plan for Students (51.6%); a Contract (51.6%); and a Communication Mechanism (47.2%). When asked which purposes the instructors incorporate into their syllabi, the survey instructions were to identify all that apply. Again the same four syllabi purposes were at the top but in yet a different order. The instructors used the syllabus as a Communication Mechanism the most with 96.8% instructors selecting it. Next purpose used was as a Course Plan for Students (93.7%) followed closely with as a Planning Tool for Instructors (90.5%) and as a Contract (86.5%).

(3) College/School Requirements for Syllabi. The survey included questions about the colleges and schools requiring instructors to create and disseminate syllabi, if syllabus copies were collected, and if the colleges and schools required any material to be included or provided templates for structure or content. Three colleges/schools require syllabi to be created, one encourages the use of syllabi, and one does not require syllabi directly. Not all participants were aware of their respective college/school policies. As shown on Table 4.18, many instructors know the syllabus requirement policy for their college or school. One hundred percent of College of Pharmacy respondents knew syllabi are required but 100% of the School of Journalism respondents incorrectly indicated that syllabi are required. The potential confusion for the journalism instructors is that their school policy makes no reference to ‘officially’ requiring syllabi but the policy requires that attendance policies be included in the syllabi thus making it sound as if syllabi are required.

Table 4.18

Percentage of Response by College/School about Syllabi Being Required

	No	Yes	Total	% Yes	College/School Policy
Liberal Arts and Science	8	52	60	86.7	Require
Business and Public Admin.	1	17	18	94.4	Encourage
Journalism	0	8	8	100.0	Not required
Pharmacy	0	11	11	100.0	Require
Education	1	18	19	94.7	Require

One question asked respondents if their college or school collected copies of the course syllabi. As shown in Table 4.19, 33 respondents answered contrary to practice or the policy and 32 of those were in the College of Liberal Arts and Science.

Table 4.19

Percentage of Responses by College/School about Collecting Copies of Syllabi

	No	Yes	Total	% Matching Policy	College/School Policy
Liberal Arts and Science	32	29	61	52.5	No
Business and Public Administration	0	18	18	100.0	Yes
Journalism	0	8	8	100.0	Yes
Pharmacy	0	11	11	100.0	Yes
Education	1	18	19	94.7	Yes

When asked if their colleges/schools required specific material on syllabi or provide templates for syllabi structure or content, 55.1% of those who answered matched policy. As shown in Table 4.20, the School of Journalism did the best with 100% of the

instructors matching their school policy about specific material to include on their syllabus.

Table 4.20

Frequency and Percentage by College/School about Required Material on Syllabi

	No	(%)	Yes	(%)	College/School Required Material
Liberal Arts and Science	40	(75.5)	22	(35.5)	Yes
Business and Public Administration	9	(16.9)	9	(50.0)	Yes
Journalism	0	(0.0)	8	(100.0)	Yes
Pharmacy	1	(1.9)	10	(90.9)	Yes
Education	3	(5.7)	16	(84.2)	Yes
Total	53	(44.9)	65	(55.1)	

(4) Influences to Create Syllabi. The survey asked the respondents where they learned to create syllabi and allows them to select up to three responses out of nine options. As shown in Table 4.21, the top three responses were Using Other Syllabi As an Unofficial Template (67.5%), Informally Through Previous Experience As a Student (61.9%) and Through Work With a Mentor (40.5%).

Table 4.21

Frequencies of Responses about Where Instructors Learned to Create Syllabi

	Frequency	%
Using other syllabi as an unofficial template	85	67.5
Informally through previous experience as a student	78	61.9
Through work with mentor	51	40.5
Course work in graduate school	38	30.2

Independently reviewed literature on syllabi development	19	15.1
Workshop on syllabus construction / faculty development	15	11.9
Still working on the skills needed	14	11.1
Using official template	12	9.5
Other	7	5.6

Note. Survey respondents could select up to three responses. $n = 126$

Respondents were asked if their college or school offers assistance or mentoring for syllabus creation and if the respondent has ever requested assistance when creating syllabi. Sixty-seven of the respondents (54%) indicated that assistance is not offered while 74 (58.7%) indicated they have requested assistance. Of the 58.7% who have requested assistance, almost 60% (44) were female. Four of the five colleges and schools indicated that they provide mentoring and the fifth one indicated that mentoring was not provided on a formal manner.

(5) Syllabi Formats. As mentioned in the results for Research Question 3, instructors indicated that the Hybrid – Paper & Online format type had the most responses with 47.6%. Paper Format received 19% and the Online Versions (web, static and interactive) had 28.6%.

(6) Effectiveness of Syllabi on Student Learning. Instructors were asked to rate on a five point scale (very negative to very positive) their general impression of the effect syllabi have on student learning. Eighty-five instructors (67.5%) rated their general impression of the effect syllabi have on student learning as positive to very positive. The neutral category rated 28.3% and 5.6% didn't answer the question. No one rated it as negative or very negative.

(7) Syllabus Components. As mentioned in the results for Research Question 2,

in regards to the syllabus components, generally speaking little difference was found between scoring for ‘essential’ and ‘useful.’ Instructor Information’s top four components were Instructor Expectations of the Students, What Students Can Expect From the Instructor, Instructor Encouragement for Class Participation, and Instructor Encouragement For Students to Ask For Help. Course Information’s the top five components were Textbook(s) & ISBN, Calendar/Outline/Assignments, Requirements – Homework, Etc., Objectives and Goals. Grading Information’s the top four components were Academic Honesty, Grading Scale, Academic Conduct and Assessment Criteria. Policy Information’s the top four components were Plagiarism/Cheating, Disability Services, Attendance and Makeup & Late Assignments. Syllabus Extras the only component with any support was Disclaimer on Syllabus.

The syllabus component parts were sorted all together from highest to lowest by their ‘essential’ percentage score and a slightly different perspective was shown. The majority of the same components were still at the top of the list but a few items were out ranked by items from a different category. As seen in Figure A.1 in Appendix D, only one of the top four instructor information components, Expectations of Students, remains in the top 18 components. Two additional components for the course information were added – Description and Outcomes. Classroom Management Policies component from the policy information category was also added.

Also when observing the total list of components, a few components stand out because one of their scores for ‘essential’ or ‘useful’ were noticeably higher than the other. Items that were visibly more ‘essential’ than ‘useful’ (not that useful was low) were Textbooks, Academic Honesty, Plagiarism, Academic Conduct, and Description.

Also items that were visibly more ‘useful’ than ‘essential’ (not that essential was low) were Course Webpage/Online Presence, Course Drop Date, Suggested Reading Outside of Class, Philosophy of Teaching and an Actual Contract for Students to Sign. None of these more ‘useful’ components were on the top lists mentioned thus far. See Appendix D – Figure A.1 and A.2 for all of the syllabus components.

Summary

This chapter presented results for the data analyses. Frequencies and descriptive data were reported for each of the survey questions. A discussion of the results and recommendations for practice and future research are presented in chapter 5.

Chapter Five – Discussion, Recommendation, and Conclusion

This chapter presents the summary of the major findings within the context of the conceptual framework and current literature. The chapter includes a summary of the study, followed by a summary and discussion of each research question, and then recommendations of practice along with recommendations for future research.

Summary of the Study

Chapter 1 described how important syllabi are to students, instructors, administrators, and accreditation organizations but how little attention is given to the purpose, structure, use or format of the document. Little empirical research has been completed in this area. This study is significant because it explores how syllabi are part of a higher education institution's structure just like the people (students and faculty), buildings, and books. However, syllabi also play a variety of valuable functions such as a communication mechanism, a planning tool, a course plan, a teaching tool or resource, an artifact for teacher evaluation, and evidence for accreditation. The function a syllabus serves depends on who is using it. Students, faculty, administrators, and accreditation personal all use the syllabus document differently. If the syllabus is that important to so many different audiences then syllabi need to be better valued in the structure of higher education organizations.

Chapter 2 began with a review of the literature on the theory of structural functionalism. The syllabus document is unique with its multiple roles and it is important to understand how these different roles and functions within the structure can affect the creation of the document and what components are included. Equally important is how the syllabus document helps the other constituents in the institutional system (faculty,

students, and administrators) meet their goals. Additionally, the chapter covered the purposes and functions of syllabi, the format options of syllabi, the numerous different structural components that can be included in syllabi, and the relationship of syllabi and higher education accreditation.

Chapter 3 provided an overview of the methodological approach for the research as quantitative through an objectivism and post-positivist worldview. The chapter provided a rationale for the quantitative approach, the corresponding philosophical assumptions and the survey research method. Next, the research setting and population were explained, then the survey instrument, the data collection procedures and the data analysis procedures were presented. The chapter concluded with the design issues of the study.

Chapter 4 presented the results of the analyzed data. Descriptive statistics were performed on the survey results to provide answers to the four research questions. A paper survey was administered to the instructors of record at a mid-sized Midwest private university in the fall 2011 semester. The respondents (126 of 352 surveyed) came from all of the colleges and schools and were from a full range of ages, educational background and position designations.

Theoretical Framework Discussion

Simply put, "the structural functionalism perspective emphasizes the interconnectedness of society by focusing on how each part influences and is influenced by other parts" (Mooney, Knox, & Schacht, 2000, p. 10). This research took a micro-level look at an education institution's structure within the higher education system. The structure has specific roles within it which include instructors, students and

administrators. Even objects take on roles or parts within the structure. These objects include books, syllabi and other teaching aides. Each role has a unique perspective for which to work with the 'parts'. Even though an instructor's typical function is to teach and a student's typical function is to learn, sometimes each role has other functions they are expected to do. The function or purpose of a syllabus as a 'part' will differ depending on the role of the person using it. This idea was seen in the research with the instructors' responses about the purpose of syllabi and how the instructors' use the syllabi.

Over time, the higher education system has begun experiencing some environmental changes – the need for quality assurance and accreditation. Parsons' assumptions about Structural Functionalism include the need for "systems to tend toward self-maintenance and maintaining boundaries with their environments" (Ritzer, 1988, p. 210). As the need for quality assessment and accreditation has increase, the higher education has begun to change and adapt. With this process of change and self-maintenance comes the adjustment in the relationships between the structure's roles. As the system is adjusting, the institution's roles are increasing the functions and purposes that syllabi play. This increase in the functions and purposes of syllabi has yet been determined as good, bad, useful or harmful.

Research Questions' Summary and Discussion

> *Despite the almost universal agreement on the need for a syllabus in college courses, what actually constitutes a syllabus – content, format, and function – remains unclear. This lack of consensus may derive from the need of the syllabus to fulfill multiple purposes and to satisfy multiple constituents. (Doolittle & Siudzinsla, 2010, p. 30)*

The syllabi, a document created by instructors for students, are strongly influenced by other instructors, department preferences/mandates, administration wishes/demands, and potentially accreditation requirements. The distinctions between this study and others was the overall view of the syllabus as a document that has many roles, functions, components and formats and trying to determine which purpose and components that instructors considered 'essential' and/or 'useful.'

Research Question 1 – Summary. For Research Question 1(Purpose of Syllabi), the top four syllabi purposes identified as being essential, useful and as being used by the respondents were syllabi purposes as: a Communication Mechanism, a Planning Tool for Instructors, a Course Plan for Students, and a Contract.

Research Question 1 – Discussion. The first research question was designed to determine if instructors consider different purposes for syllabi and then to what degree they consider those purposes as essential or useful. The literature identified a number of different purposes and the terms were grouped into eight categories - (1) communication mechanism, (2) planning tool for instructor, (3) course plan for student, (4) teaching (pedagogical tool)/resource for student learning, (5) artifact for teacher evaluation/ permanent record/ evidence for accreditation, administration, assessment or curriculum planning, (6) contract – policies and procedures to be followed, (7) socialization process for student to academic environment, and (8) scholarship for faculty. The categories were not meant to be mutually exclusive.

As discussed in the review of literature, some of the syllabi purposes are more specific to certain users and syllabi can have more than one purpose or function. The most basic purpose is as a Communication Mechanism. The main point of a syllabus is

to share information thus a communication mechanism but also for more specific purposes such as a planning tool or course plan. A factor that Thompson (2007) mentions is how instructors try to balance their caring and nurturing side for the student with the need to be focused on teaching and the student learning and how to communicate those two mindsets carefully in a syllabus. The author also explained how these different users have conflicting perspectives. Part of this research study asked instructors to identify syllabi purposes they considered to be essential. Over half of the instructors identified syllabi as a Planning Tool for Instructors and a Course Plan for Students to be essential purposes while the purpose of Socialization was considered less essential. Socialization as described in the review of literature can include some of Thompson's (2007) notion of balancing teacher's caring side to help students' socialization while also maintaining their role as instructor. So even though the instructors identified Socialization as low on the essential scale, they still identified both a purpose that focuses on their own instructor needs as well as a purpose that focuses on the students' needs.

Additionally, the instructors indicated the syllabus as a Course Plan for Students to be useful. The Course Plan for Students is probably the one purpose that all syllabi users (students, instructors, administrators and accreditation organizations) would have relatively the same level of interest but for different reasons. Students want to know what the assignments will be. If students are aware of what is happening in the class, it makes the instructor's job potentially easier. The administration and accreditation organizations want the students to be informed of course goals and outcomes, which can be part of the course plan.

In addition to identifying syllabi as a Planning Tool for Instructors as being essential, instructors also selected syllabi as a Contract. The Contract perspective of a syllabus can be very controversial. Since the syllabus typically includes grading information and policy type of information, it would lead some to view the syllabus as a contract. Grading and policy components could be disputed and litigated; however, a course timeline or a list of topics to cover in a semester is something that might change and typically does. Calling that part of a syllabus a contract and holding it up to the same standard as a grading policy such as 'no late assignments will be accepted' may not seem practical to everyone. At a basic level, the syllabus starts to layout the student-faculty relationship but with laws such as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) that can involve the classroom, the relationship structure has become more rigid and formal (Singham, 2005). The dynamics of the classroom and the pace at which the class is learning material are common and legitimate reasons to alter the course syllabus schedule. However, many institutions recommend the inclusion of a disclaimer on the syllabus indicating that it is subject to change. Over 50% of the respondents in this study agree with the inclusion of the disclaimer indicating that it is both essential and useful. The Contract purpose of a syllabus also relates to issues that concern administrators – such as policies and grading. Course specific policies as well as college or university level policies can become reasons for administrators to review disputed grades or disciplinary actions.

The purpose of syllabi as Artifact for Teacher Evaluation/ Permanent Record/Evidence for Accreditation, Administration, Assessment or Curriculum Planning had a mean score of 3.82 on a 1 to 5 scale for essential and a mean score of 3.69 for

useful thus it was neither high nor low on being considered essential or useful by instructors. In Seldin's (1998) study, he indicated an increase in the importance of seven different sources of instructor evaluation over a ten year period. One of those sources of instructor evaluation was course syllabi. Though this study was not longitudinal, instructors may already be experiencing the use of syllabi in their evaluations. Over 90% of the instructors were aware of their college or school policy on requiring syllabi.

Two other purposes, Teaching Tool/Resource for Student Learning and Socialization for Students, have mean scores that are around the 3.0 on the essential and useful scales, which makes them neither low nor high. Regarding the purpose of Teaching Tool/Resource for Student Learning, a couple of survey respondents indicated that some of the components related to resources might be on the syllabus and some are in separate documents. For this institution, most instructors do not consider the addition of resources for student learning on syllabi as essential or useful. They could be providing it in different documents.

Socialization for Student might not be a purpose that instructors at this institution consider to be essential or that students would have an immediate interest in but if the students' experiences in the classroom were unpleasant and filled with anxiety, both students and instructors might see how a purpose like this would help. Creating a syllabus that provides information (or communicates the information) about assessment and grading might help minimize student stress and anxiety as well as prevent grievance and complaints against faculty (Parkes, Fix & Harris, 2003). Newer instructors might need mentoring in this area to determine if socialization has benefits.

The survey results were clear that instructors at the institution do not consider the purpose of a syllabus as Scholarship for Faculty to be essential or useful; it was rated very low on both the 'essential' and 'useful' scales. What is not clear is why they responded that way. They might not have been exposed to this idea of scholarship including syllabi, but as Albers (2003) describes, "the syllabus is one of the few tools available for documenting the scholarship required for integrating isolated learning activities into a coherent meaningful whole" (p. 63). If instructors consider their course documents and even the syllabus as their intellectual property in part by the amount of work they put into its creation, then they might have rated this differently. Some may be protective about who they share the documents with and how public they become because it is their intellectual property. Some institutions make their syllabi and other course documents available for all to view.

Research Question 2 – Summary. For Research Question 2 (Syllabus Components), generally speaking, little difference was found between ratings for 'essential' and 'useful.' The syllabus components were separated into five groups: Instructor Information, Course Information, Grading Information, Policy Information, and Syllabus Extras. Each component was rated on a 1 to 5 scale with 1 being low and 5 being high for being essential and useful. Table 5.1 compares the essential and useful rankings by groupings and overall when listing out the mean scores for all components and ranking them highest to lowest. The Overall ranking was very similar to the Group Component rankings. The two major differences are (1) the exclusion of three Instruction Information components and (2) the addition of three components that did not

rank in the top in their designated group. These three additions were Course Description, Course Outcomes and Policy Classroom Management.

Table 5.1

Top Syllabi Components Ranking of Essential and Useful by Group and Overall

	Ranking by Component Group		Ranking Overall	
	Essential	Useful	Essential	Useful
Instructor Information				
Instructor Expectations of the Students	E1	U1	E5	U6
What Students Can Expect from the Instructor	E2	U2	-	-
Instructor Encouragement for Class Participation	E3	U4	-	-
Instructor Encouragement for Students to Ask for Help	E4	U3	-	-
Course Information				
Textbook(s) & ISBN	E1	U2	E3	U2
Calendar/Outline/Assignments	E2	U1	E4	U1
Requirements – Homework, Etc.	E3	U3	E6	U4
Objectives	E4	U4	E9	U9
Goals	E5	U5	E11	U11
Description	-	-	E13	U15
Outcomes	-	-	E17	U17
Grading Information				
Academic Honesty	E1	U2	E1	U7
Grading Scale	E2	U1	E7	U5
Academic Conduct	E3	U3	E10	U14
Assessment Criteria	E4	U4	E14	U10
Policy Information				
Plagiarism/Cheating	E1	U1	E2	U3
Disability Services	E2	U2	E8	U8
Attendance	E3	U3	E12	U12
Makeup & Late Assignments	E4	U4	E15	U13
Classroom Management	-	-	E18	U18

Syllabus Extras				
Disclaimer on Syllabus	E1	U1	E16	U16

Research Question 2 – Discussion. *"When information is not mentioned on a syllabus, as frequently is the case, this omission itself may serve implicitly to identify what information the instructor considers to be of minimal or no importance" (Parkes, Fix & Harris, 2003, p. 62).*

In order to address the second research question, the researcher identified over 60 different syllabus component parts that were used in the literature and other syllabus design research. From Doolittle and Siudzinski's (2010) study came the categories of Instructor Information, Course Information, Grading Information and Policy Information. These categories were appropriate for this researcher but an additional category was needed for items that did not sufficient fit within the other four categories and it was called Miscellaneous Syllabus Components or Syllabus Extras.

The focus of this research was distinctive in that no other syllabus design research had this specific rating of essential and useful. Other studies (Becker & Calhoon, 1999; Deck, Marcis & Keller, 2010; Doolittle & Siudzinski, 2010; Garavalia et al., 1999; Marcis et al., 2005; Parkes, Fix, & Harris, 2003; and Smith & Razzouk, 1993) examined how faculty and/or students view the 'importance' of syllabi components using a scale. Though this research survey did not include definitions for essential and useful, the terms seemed obvious enough for educated instructors to distinguish the difference between them.

This study did not examine how essential or useful basic information about the instructor (name, phone number, email address, office location and office hours) or

course (name, department name & number, semester/year, credit hours, day/time of course, and location) were to the instructor because these components are considered typical pieces of information that instructors would include or would be required or encouraged to include by institutional administrators. Other research (Becker & Calhoon, 1999; Deck, Marcis & Keller, 2010; Doolittle & Siudzinski, 2010; Garavalia et al., 1999; Marcis et al., 2005; and Smith & Razzouk, 1993) used component lists of 40 or fewer items and these included the basic type of information such as the instructor's name and some included very specific information such as the number of exams used in a course. This research study used 48 more general component names.

This study had similar results as the other syllabus design research studies. Marcis et al. (2005) used the 28 syllabus components to survey faculty that Becker and Calhoon (1999) used to survey students. Just like their results, the instructors in this research indicated that grading, textbooks, kinds of assignments, and attendance policies were important and essential. Doolittle and Siudzinski's (2010) used the syllabus component parts derived from Becker and Calhoon (1999) and Garavalia et al. (1999) to analyze syllabi. In this study, instructors identified syllabus component parts as essential and useful in this study's general component areas.

When the frequency totals for the syllabus component parts were sorted all together from highest to lowest, a slightly different perspective was shown. See Figure A.1 and A.2 in the Appendix D for the complete list including mean scores. The majority of the same components were still at the top of the list but a few items were out ranked overall or from a category as previously see in Table 5.1. Categorizing the components illustrated important perceptions of instructors for items within the category but the

overall ranking illustrates how the instructors at this institution value components that impact the students such as grading components (Academic Honesty, Plagiarism/Cheating) and course components (Textbook(s) & ISBN, Calendar/Outline/Assignments).

Also when observing the Overall list of components, a few components stand out because one of their scores for essential or useful were higher than the other. Items that were more essential than useful (not that useful was low) were Textbooks, Academic Honesty, Plagiarism, Course Description, and Student Role & Responsibility. Also items that were more useful than essential (not that essential was low) were Course Webpage/Online Presence, Course Drop Date, Suggested Reading Outside of Class, a Course Guide for Learning/Studying Outside of Class and an Actual Contract for Students to Sign. None of the components that were more useful than essential were on the top category component lists or the overall component list. This list of components comes primarily from the course information category which benefits the students but does not rise to the level of being a required or essential. If the purpose of a syllabus is more student focused, then more of these 'useful' components would be used.

The institution provides a new faculty orientation that includes a session on syllabi design and creation. Instructors are encouraged to include a number of items such as basic information about the course, grading criteria, academic integrity and disability services. The items mentioned in the orientation session include ten of the items that instructors have rated as essential and useful and one item that appeared on the 'more essential than useful' list. Respondents were not asked if they have ever attended any of

these sessions. Since the session has only been offered for a few years, providing sessions to all instructors would be appropriate.

The survey did not ask the instructors to identify what information was required on the syllabus by the college or school. However, since all of the colleges and schools require some items to be included and 44.9% respondents were not aware of the requirement, the responses might have been as equally telling if they were asked to list required components.

Research Question 3 – Summary. For Research Question 3(Syllabi Formats), respondents indicated that 47.6% use a Hybrid - Paper and Online format, 28.6% use one of the Online formats, and 19% use Only Paper syllabi.

Research Question 3 – Discussion. The third research question for this study asked what syllabus format instructors use. The format in which the instructor provides the syllabus is occasionally dictated due to the nature of the course such as it being an online or a distance education course. In those instances, instructors do not have a face-to-face session to share the syllabus so it might be a PDF file emailed to the students or it could be as elaborate as webpage layout. These different formats could make some of the syllabi purposes easier to achieve in an electronic or online format. Though 42% of the instructors indicated they have taught online classes before, in a separate question, only 28.6% indicated they have used some type of online format. The Hybrid – Paper & Online format received the highest response rate with 47.6%. A question that was not asked on the survey is whether these instructors are interested in migrating more to the online format beyond having a PDF copy of the syllabus on Blackboard.

As higher education continues to incorporate more technology into the teaching process through online courses, online textbooks, online library resources and learning management systems (such as Blackboard), students will start demanding more syllabi be available online and in more interactive formats (Kousha & Thelwell, 2008). Administration may also have an interest in an online syllabus to cut down on printing costs associated with syllabi.

Research Question 4 – Summary. For Research Question 4 (Use of Syllabi), has eight parts to consider. (1) All but one respondent indicated they refer to the syllabus after the first day and 44.4% indicated they refer to the syllabus at least once a week or more. Their top four written-in reasons to refer to the syllabus included referring to Assignments, Calendar, or Schedule (75.8% of the respondents), to Policies (20.6%), to Reminders (20.6%) and to Grading (11.3%). (2) The syllabi purpose that instructors viewed as essential and useful were: a Communication Mechanism, a Planning Tool for Instructors, a Course Plan for Students, and a Contract. (3) The instructors used the syllabus as a Communication Mechanism the most with 96.8% instructors selecting it. Next purpose used was as a Course Plan for Students (93.7%) followed closely with as a Planning Tool for Instructors (90.5%) and as a Contract (86.5%). (4) While over 50% of the instructors knew their college or school policies related to syllabi being required and collected, there was less consistency with the respondents reporting if their college or school requires material to be included on the course syllabus. (5) Over 60% indicated they learned to create their course syllabi through unofficial templates and informally through previous experience as a student. Also, more females indicated they have asked for assistance when creating syllabi. (6) The Hybrid – Paper & Online format type had

the most responses with 47.6%. Paper format received 19% and the Online versions (web, static and interactive) had 28.6%. (7) All instructors indicated that syllabi have either no effect (27.0%) or a positive effect (67.5%) on student learning. And (8) the syllabi components that are viewed as essential and useful overall include components from all five categories: Academic Honesty, Plagiarism/Cheating, Textbook (ISBN), Calendar/Outline/Assignment, Expectations of the Student, Course Requirements, Grading Scale, Disability Services Policy, Objectives, Academic Conduct, Goals, Attendance Policy, Course Description, Assessment Criteria, Makeup & Late Assignment Policy, Syllabus Disclaimer, Outcomes, and Classroom Management.

Research Question 4 – Discussion. The fourth research question for this study asked how instructors use their syllabi. Since this study relied on the instructors to self-report about their use of syllabi, several pieces of different information were gathered and used to try to answer the question. The instructors reported that they refer to syllabi for schedule/calendar/ assignments (dates/details/instruction), policies, reminder, grading, and for expectations. These components correspond with the respondents identifying Course Plan for Students as essential.

Instructors also reported they view the syllabi purposes of communication to be essential. Considering that communication can be more encompassing, it was expected that it would rank high as being essential and useful as well as being used by the instructors.

The syllabus components identified as essential and useful all correspond with the purposes selected as essential and for those purposes actually used by the instructors.

Even the format choices preferred by most of the instructors aligns with the types of syllabi components and purposes rated as essential and useful.

All instructors indicated that syllabi have either no effect (27%) or a positive effect (67.5%) on student learning so instructors do value syllabi but have little or no systematic help such as mentoring or workshops/training to improve their syllabi design skills. Also with over 60% of the instructors indicating they learned to create their course syllabi through unofficial templates and informally through previous experience as a student, the institution would have a good reason to expand their faculty development programs and workshops to include more structured opportunities for instructors to learn about current trends in syllabus design and creation. The institution already incorporates a session for new faculty so addition sessions for returning faculty would be appropriate.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore how instructors at a mid-sized Midwest four-year undergraduate private university view the purpose, structure, format and use of their course syllabi. Instructors consider multiple syllabi purposes as essential and useful and it was supported by their responses about which purposes they use on their syllabi. A third piece of information the instructors provided was how often they refer to the syllabus and for what reasons. These responses confirmed that many the instructors use the syllabus as a communication mechanism, referring to it at least once a week. Also the syllabus serving the purpose as a course plan for students was clear by their responses especially when the reasons they refer to the syllabi were almost all about items related to the students' use of the document. Many instructors use a basic online syllabus format such as a PDF on Blackboard, which is not much different than just a paper version.

Again, this format would be appropriate for the purposes they are using it as are the course components. The top 18 syllabi components identified as essential and useful relate to items that students would want to know with the most components directly associated to the course, policies and grading.

Significance

Syllabi are part of a higher education institution's structure just like the people (students and faculty), buildings, and books. However, syllabi also play a variety of valuable functions such as a communication mechanism, a planning tool, a course plan, a teaching tool or resource, an artifact for teacher evaluation, and evidence for accreditation. The function a syllabus serves depends on who is using it. Students, faculty, administrators, and accreditation personal all use the document differently. If the syllabi's functions are that important to so many different audiences then syllabi design needs to be more purposefully and systematically shared with instructors.

This study contributes to the existing body of literature by looking beyond the term importance and exploring how instructors view the syllabi purposes and component as 'essential' or 'useful.' More information was available to determine which syllabi purposes and components were rated as (1) both essential and useful, (2) essential but less useful, (3) useful but less essential, or (4) not considered essential or useful. Syllabi purposes and components fell into all of those categories.

Recommendations

Based on the results of this research, the following recommendations are made for practice and future study.

Recommendation for Practice. As a result of this study, the mid-sized Midwest undergraduate university will have a better understanding of how their instructors collectively perceive the purpose, structure, format and use of syllabi. The importance in this is to create best practices related to syllabi

(1) Administrators may want to build an appropriate culture that encourages and supports the multiple purposes and formats of a syllabus including additional workshops and training sessions for syllabi creation and use of technology.

(2) The administration may want to create and promote a repository of syllabi to allow for easy review for curriculum planning, assessment, accreditation, and for instructors looking for examples.

(3) Through faculty development programs and workshops, instructors could learn the value for incorporating certain syllabi purposes or formats into their individual syllabi as well as what syllabus components to include.

(4) A more specific type of faculty development program or workshop would be how to write better Course Goals and Objectives. These two components were among those identified as essential and useful.

(5) The administration or the faculty governance may find it important for syllabi to require certain components at a department, college or institutional level such as course outcomes and policies or to create standards for syllabi at a college/school or institutional level.

Recommendations for Future Research.

1. Conduct additional statistical analysis on the current study results to look for causal comparative or correlations/relationships significance based on instructors' gender, education, years of teaching, or college/school affiliation.
2. Conduct this same study but with student respondents to determine what they view as essential and useful about syllabi and how different it is from the instructors' views.
3. Conduct a syllabus analysis to determine if instructor syllabi have the same purposes/components as the instructors self-reported.

Conclusion

A course syllabus is a valuable document to a student and an instructor but the uses or functions for the document go beyond those two roles. Over the years, the increase in accountability and assessment has added administrators and accreditation organizations into the mix. Now this document that is typically seen as a guide for a student in the classroom is now seen as documentation that instructors and institutions are providing the education with noted outcomes. It is recommended that this particular institution consider additional education to instructors about best practices related to syllabi design.

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Appendix A

Department/College Faculty Meeting Script

Thank you for allowing me a few minutes in your meeting.

As a Doctoral Candidate at Drake University's School of Education, I'm collecting data as part of my dissertation research.

The purpose of the study is to explore how instructors at a mid-sized Midwest four-year undergraduate private university view the purpose, structure, use and format of their course syllabi.

The survey should take about 15 minutes to complete. Your answers are anonymous and results from the study will be analyzed, written and published in aggregate form. Please DO NOT put your name on the survey.

If you have already completed this survey at a different time, please do not complete it again.

NOTE that comments made in the comments/clarification sections might be used as anecdotal evidence in the final report only if your identification cannot be determined.

Your participation is voluntary and refusal to participate does not involve any penalty. You may discontinue participation at any time without penalty. You may keep the consent document (top sheet) for your records if you so choose.

If you wish to participate in the study, please complete the attached survey.
If you do not wish to participate, please return the blank survey at the end when all surveys are collected.
If you begin the survey and change your mind, return the incomplete survey when all surveys are collected.

The results of this survey will be included in the dissertation document which will be publically available through the Drake University Cowles Library upon completion.

My contact information as well as the IRB contact information is located on the consent form.

Thank You for your time and assistance with my research project

Appendix B

Survey Consent Form and Survey Instrument

Consent Document

I am asking you to participate in a research study. Please read the information below and feel free to ask any questions you may have.

A. Project Description
   1. The purpose of the study is to explore how instructors at a mid-sized Midwest four-year undergraduate private university view the purpose, structure, use and format of their course syllabi.
   2. You will be asked to share your opinions and perceptions related to the creation, purpose, structure, use and format of your course syllabi.
   3. The estimated time to complete this survey is approximately 15 minutes.
   4. The research is being conducted with the goal of completing my doctoral program.
   5. The dissertation when completed will be archived in university library.

B. Risks and Benefits
   Your participation in this study does not involve any physical risk or emotional risks to you beyond the risks of daily life. You have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time for any reason. Your decision to withdraw will not involve any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled. The benefits of this study include the potential to learning new ideas to incorporate into your course syllabi.

C. Confidentiality
   Your name will not be attached to your answers so your confidentiality can be maintained. Your privacy will be ensured in that all data resulting from this study will be analyzed, written and published in aggregate form. If you make comments on the survey, they might be used for anecdotal evidence in the final report but only if your identity cannot be determined in what the comment says.

D. Contact Information
   If you have any questions or concerns about the research, you may contact Susan Breakenridge Fink.
   If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research, you can contact the Institutional Review Board

E. Subjects Rights
   Your participation is voluntary and refusal to participate does not involve any penalty. You may discontinue participation at any time without penalty. You may keep the consent document (this sheet) for your records if you so choose.

   If you wish to participate in the study, please complete the attached survey.
   If you do not wish to participate, please return the blank survey at the end when all surveys are collected.
   If you begin the survey and change your mind, return the incomplete survey when all surveys are collected.

Directions: From your perspective please mark (X) the most appropriate response or answer the question in the blank provided. Some questions have special directions.

1. Gender		Female			Male

2. Highest level of completed education:

	Masters		PhD/EdD		Other:_____

3. School, college or department currently assigned to regarding instruction:

	Liberal arts and science			Education
	Business and public administration			Undergraduate Library
	Journalism			FYS (First Year Seminar offerings ONLY)
	Pharmacy			Other: _____

4. How many years have you been teaching in higher education including your time at X Institution? _____

Comment/clarification:

5. Which of the following designations currently describes your position at X Institution regarding instruction?

	Tenure track faculty			Adjunct faculty/instructor
	Tenured faculty			University lecturer/instructor (full-time X-Institution staff teaching a class as 'other duties as assigned)
	Visiting faculty/instructor			Other:_____

For the next set of questions, using the scale below, please circle the number that matches your level of agreement for how essential AND useful each purpose/function is to a syllabus.

You should have two responses for each component **Scale: 1=low, 5=high**

The purpose/function of a syllabus as a(an)…	**Essential**						**Useful**				
6. Communication mechanism	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**		**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
7. Planning tool for instructor	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**		**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
8. Course plan for student	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**		**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
9. Teaching (pedagogical) Tool / Resource for student learning	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**		**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
10. Artifact for Teacher Evaluations / Permanent Record / Evidence for Accreditation, Administration, Assessment or Curriculum Planning	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**		**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
11. Contract – policies & procedures to be followed	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**		**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
12. Socialization process for student to academic environment	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**		**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
13. Scholarship opportunity for faculty	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**		**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

Comment/clarification:

14. Which of the 8 purpose/functions of a syllabus have you incorporated into your syllabi in the last 12 months? Mark all that apply.	
a. Communication mechanism	
b. Planning tool for instructor	
c. Course plan for student	
d. Teaching (pedagogical) Tool / Resource for student learning	
e. Artifact for Teacher Evaluations / Permanent Record / Evidence for Accreditation, Administration, Assessment or Curriculum Planning	
f. Contract – policies & procedures to be followed	
g. Socialization process for student to academic environment	
h. Scholarship opportunity for faculty	
Comment/clarification:	

	YES		**NO**
15. Does your department or school/college require that you create and disseminate to students a syllabus for each course you teach?			
16. Does your department or college/school collect copies of your course syllabi?			
17. Does your department or school/college require specific material to be included in your syllabi?			
18. Does your department or college/school provide a template for syllabi structure (categories)?			
19. Does your department or college/school provide a template for syllabi content (specific wording)?			
Comment/clarification:			

20. Where did you learn to create or develop your syllabi? (select top 3 items)	
	Informally though previous experience of using syllabi as a student
	Course work in graduate school
	Workshop on syllabus construction/faculty development sessions
	Independently reviewed literature on syllabi development
	Through work with a mentor
	Using other syllabi as an unofficial template
	Using official template
	Still working on the skills needed
	Other:_____
Comment/clarification:	

21. Does your department or college/school offer assistance or mentoring for syllabus creation?		
	Yes	**Comment/clarification:**
	No	

22. Have you ever requested assistance (suggestions or copies of previous syllabi for a course) when creating your syllabi?		
	Yes	**Comment/clarification:**
	No	

23. a. Do you refer to the syllabus after the first class session? _____

b. What reason(s) are you referring to the syllabus? _____

c. How often do you attempt to refer to the syllabus during the course?_____
(every class meeting, a couple times a term, etc.)

Comment/clarification:

24. In what format do you provide syllabi? (select only one)	
	Paper only
	Only online version (same as a paper version with no updates just viewable online – ex: PDF)
	Only online web version (update content)
	Only online web version that is interactive (links to other content)
	Hybrid – Paper and online (Identify which version of online_____
	Varies by the course: Identify which different ones you use_____

Comment/clarification:

25. Do you teach (or have you taught) an online (web) course?		
	Yes	**Comment/clarification:**
	No	

26. On the following 1-5 scale – rate your general impression of the effect syllabi have on student learning.

1		2		3		4		5	
Very negative		**Negative**		**Neutral**		**Positive**		**Very Positive**	

Instructor Information

For the next set of questions, using the scale below, please circle the number that matches your level of agreement for how essential AND useful each of the Instructor Information Components are.

You should have two responses for each component **Scale: 1=low, 5=high**

(Instructor name, phone number, email addresses, office location and office hours are considered typical.)	Essential						Useful				
27. instructor cell phone number	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
28. instructor social networking IDs (such as for Facebook or Linked In)	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
29. instructor philosophy of teaching	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
30. instructor expectations of students	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
31. instructor assumptions about students	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
32. instructor methods of instruction	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
33. instructor teaching tools (purpose & rationale)	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
34. what students can expect from instructor	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
35. instructor tips on how to succeed in course	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
36. instructor encouragement for class participation	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
37. instructor encouragement for students to ask for help	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
38. instructor evaluations/feedback from students	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5

Course Information

For the next set of questions, using the scale below, please circle the number that matches your level of agreement for how essential AND useful each of the Course Information Components are.

You should have two responses for each component **Scale: 1=low, 5=high**

(Course name, department name & number, semester/year, credit hours, day/time, and location are all considered typical.)	Essential						Useful				
39. course drop date	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
40. course webpage or online presence (Blackboard, etc)	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
41. course prerequisites	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
42. course description	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
43. course objectives	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
44. course goals	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
45. course learning outcomes	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
46. course text book(s) including ISBN	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
47. course material (handouts, supplies, etc)	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
48. course library resources	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
49. support services-writing center, tutoring, counseling	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
50. course content / orientation to content	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
51. course calendar / outline / assignment list	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
52. course graphic or cognitive map	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
53. course requirements-homework, tests, labs, group work	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
54. course guide for learning/studying outside of class	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
55. suggested reading outside of class including web links	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5

Grading Information

For the next set of questions, using the scale below, please circle the number that matches your level of agreement for how essential AND useful each of the Grading Information Components are.

You should have two responses for each component **Scale: 1=low, 5=high**

	Essential						Useful				
56. grading/assessment criteria (specifics of assignments – rubrics; type of tests, etc)	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
57. grading scale	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
58. course feedback (when will student receive progress information)	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
59. student role & responsibilities	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
60. student academic conduct	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
61. student academic honesty	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5

Policy Information

For the next set of questions, using the scale below, please circle the number that matches your level of agreement for how essential AND useful each of the Policy Information Components are.

You should have two responses for each component **Scale: 1=low, 5=high**

	Essential						Useful				
62. extra credit policy	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
63. attendance policy	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
64. revision or redoing policy	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
65. makeup policies and late assignments	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
66. incomplete policy	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
67. plagiarism policy / Cheating	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
68. disability services policy	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
69. classroom civility in discourse	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
70. classroom management policies: cell phones, ipods, eating,	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5

Syllabus Extras

For the next set of questions, using the scale below, please circle the number that matches your level of agreement for how essential AND useful each of the Syllabus Extras Components are.

You should have two responses for each component **Scale: 1=low, 5=high**

	Essential						Useful				
71. Space for classmate contact information	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
72. Actual 'contract' for students to sign and return	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
73. Copyright designation on the syllabus as protection for instructor especially with online syllabi	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
74. Disclaimer on syllabus that it is tentative-subject to change	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5

Comment/clarification:

Thank you for completing the survey! Susan Breakenridge Fink

Appendix C

Syllabi Components Citations

Instructor Information:	
instructor name	Altman, 1989; Appleby, 1994; Behnke & Miller, 1989; Doolittle & Siudzinski, 2010; Eberly, Newton & Wiggins, 2001*; Lowther, Stark & Martens, 1989; Marcis, Keller, Deck & Carr, 2005*; Matejka & Kurke, 1994; Parkes & Harris, 2002*; Passman & Green, 2009; Seeman, 2010; Slattery & Carlson, 2005; Thompson, 2007*
instructor phone number	Altman, 1989; Appleby, 1994; Behnke & Miller, 1989; Doolittle & Siudzinski, 2010; Eberly, Newton & Wiggins, 2001*; Lowther, Stark & Martens, 1989; Marcis, Keller, Deck & Carr, 2005*; Matejka & Kurke, 1994; Parkes & Harris, 2002*; Passman & Green, 2009; Slattery & Carlson, 2005
instructor email address	Altman, 1989; Appleby, 1994; Behnke & Miller, 1989; Doolittle & Siudzinski, 2010; Eberly, Newton & Wiggins, 2001*; Lowther, Stark & Martens, 1989; Marcis, Keller, Deck & Carr, 2005*; Matejka & Kurke, 1994; Parkes & Harris, 2002*; Passman & Green, 2009; Seeman, 2010; Slattery & Carlson, 2005
instructor office location	Altman, 1989; Appleby, 1994; Behnke & Miller, 1989; Doolittle & Siudzinski, 2010; Eberly, Newton & Wiggins, 2001*; Lowther, Stark & Martens, 1989; Marcis, Keller, Deck & Carr, 2005*; Matejka & Kurke, 1994; Parkes & Harris, 2002*; Passman & Green, 2009; Slattery & Carlson, 2005
instructor office hours	Altman, 1989; Appleby, 1994; Behnke & Miller, 1989; Doolittle & Siudzinski, 2010; Eberly, Newton & Wiggins, 2001*; Lowther, Stark & Martens, 1989; Marcis, Keller, Deck & Carr, 2005*; Matejka & Kurke, 1994; Parkes & Harris, 2002*; Passman & Green, 2009; Seeman, 2010; Slattery & Carlson, 2005
instructor cell phone number	Ball State, 2001; NIACC, 2009
instructor social networking IDs (such as Facebook or Linked In)	LeNoue, Hall, & Eighmy, 2011
instructor philosophy of teaching	Appleby, 1994; Cullen & Harris, 2009*; Matejka & Kurke, 1994; Smith & Razzouk, 1993*
instructor expectations of students	Davis, 1993; Smith & Razzouk, 1993*; Expectations of professionalism-ethics, behaviors, work habit - Parkes & Harris, 2002*
instructor assumptions about students	Lowther, Stark & Martens, 1989
instructor methods of instruction	Eberly, Newton & Wiggins, 2001*; Marcis, Keller, Deck & Carr, 2005*; Parkes & Harris, 2002*; Smith & Razzouk, 1993*
instructor teaching tools (purpose & rationale)	Estes, 2007; Hammons & Shock, 1994; Matejka & Kurke, 1994; Slattery & Carlson, 2005; Smith & Razzouk, 1993*
what students can expect from instructor	Slattery & Carlson, 2005
instructor tips on how to succeed in course	Habanek, 2005*; Parkes & Harris, 2002*
instructor encouragement for class participation	Gaffney, 2009; Perrine & Lisle, 1995*
instructor encouragement for students to ask for help	Gaffney, 2009; Perrine & Lisle, 1995*
instructor evaluations/feedback from students	Hammons & Shock, 1994; Smith & Razzouk, 1993*

Course Information:	
course name	Altman,1989; Appleby, 1994; Doolittle & Siudzinski, 2010; Eberly, Newton & Wiggins, 2001*; Hammons & Shock, 1994; Lowther, Stark, & Martens, 1989; Marcis, Keller, Deck & Carr, 2005*; Matejka & Kurke, 1994; Parkes & Harris, 2002*; Passman & Green, 2009; Seeman, 2010; Slattery & Carlson, 2005; Smith & Razzouk,1993
course department and number	Altman,1989; Appleby, 1994; Doolittle & Siudzinski, 2010; Eberly, Newton & Wiggins, 2001*; Hammons & Shock, 1994; Lowther, Stark, & Martens, 1989; Marcis, Keller, Deck & Carr, 2005*; Matejka & Kurke, 1994; Parkes & Harris, 2002*; Passman & Green, 2009; Seeman, 2010; Slattery & Carlson, 2005; Smith & Razzouk,1993
course semester/year	Altman,1989; Appleby, 1994; Doolittle & Siudzinski, 2010; Eberly, Newton & Wiggins, 2001*; Hammons & Shock, 1994; Lowther, Stark, & Martens, 1989; Marcis, Keller, Deck & Carr, 2005*; Matejka & Kurke, 1994; Parkes & Harris, 2002*; Passman & Green, 2009; Slattery & Carlson, 2005; Smith & Razzouk,1993
course credit hours	Altman,1989; Appleby, 1994; Doolittle & Siudzinski, 2010; Hammons & Shock, 1994; Lowther, Stark, & Martens, 1989; Marcis, Keller, Deck & Carr, 2005*; Matejka & Kurke, 1994; Parkes & Harris, 2002*; Passman & Green, 2009; Seeman, 2010; Slattery & Carlson, 2005; Smith & Razzouk,1993
course day/time	Altman,1989; Appleby, 1994; Doolittle & Siudzinski, 2010; Eberly, Newton & Wiggins, 2001*; Hammons & Shock, 1994; Lowther, Stark, & Martens, 1989; Marcis, Keller, Deck & Carr, 2005*; Matejka & Kurke, 1994; Parkes & Harris, 2002*; Passman & Green, 2009; Seeman, 2010; Slattery & Carlson, 2005; Smith & Razzouk,1993
course location	Altman,1989; Appleby, 1994; Doolittle & Siudzinski, 2010; Hammons & Shock, 1994; Lowther, Stark, & Martens, 1989; Marcis, Keller, Deck & Carr, 2005*; Matejka & Kurke, 1994; Parkes & Harris, 2002*; Passman & Green, 2009; Slattery & Carlson, 2005; Smith & Razzouk,1993
course drop date	Davis, 1993; Marcis, Keller, Deck & Carr, 2005*
course webpage or online presence (Blackboard, etc.)	Passman & Green, 2009
course prerequisites	Hammons & Shock, 1994; Marcis, Keller, Deck & Carr, 2005*; Passman & Green, 2009; Identify any technical skills needed or recommended - Eberly, Newton & Wiggins, 2001*; Madson, Melcher & Whipp, 2004*; role of technology Grunert O'Brien, Millis, & Cohen, 2008; Parkes & Harris, 2002*
course description	Altman, 1989; Appleby, 1994; Doolittle & Siudzinski, 2010; Hammons & Shock, 1994; Marcis, Keller, Deck & Carr, 2005*; Slattery & Carlson, 2005
course objectives	Altman, 1989; Appleby, 2005; Behnke & Miller, 1989; Doolittle & Siudzinski, 2010; Hammons & Shock, 1994; Lowther, Stark & Martens, 2004; Marcis, Keller, Deck & Carr,2005; Matejka & Kurke, 1994; Parkes & Harris, 2002*; Passman & Green, 2009; Smith & Razzouk, 1993*

course goals	Altman, 1989; Behnke & Miller, 1989; Doolittle & Siudzinski, 2010; Hammons & Shock, 1994; Lowther, Stark & Martens, 2004; Marcis, Keller, Deck & Carr, 2005*; Passman & Green, 2009; Slattery & Carlson, 2005; Smith & Razzouk, 1993*
course learning outcomes	Passman & Green, 2009
course text book(s) including ISBN	Appleby, 1994; Doolittle & Siudzinski, 2010; Lowther, Stark & Martens, 2004; Marcis, Keller, Deck & Carr, 2005*; Matejka & Kurke, 1994; Parkes & Harris, 2002*; Passman & Green, 2009; Smith & Razzouk, 1993*
course material (handouts, supplies, etc.)	Grunert O'Brien, Millis, & Cohen, 2008; Hammons & Shock, 1994; Parkes & Harris, 2002*; Smith & Razzouk, 1993*
course library resources	Altman, 1989; & facilities Smith & Razzouk, 1993*
support services-writing center, tutoring, counseling	Doolittle & Lusk, 2007*; Marcis, Keller, Deck & Carr, 2005* Parkes & Harris, 2002*
course content / orientation to content	Altman, 1989; Doolittle & Siudzinski, 2010; Eberly, Newton & Wiggins, 2001*; Marcis, Keller, Deck & Carr, 2005*; Parkes, Fix & Harris, 2003*; Smith & Razzouk, 1993*; Thompson, 2007*
course calendar / outline / assignment list	Altman, 1989; Doolittle & Siudzinski, 2010; Eberly, Newton & Wiggins, 2001*; Marcis, Keller, Deck & Carr, 2005*; Rambler, 1982; Including Due Dates of out-of-class assignments - Doolittle & Siudzinski, 2010; Marcis, Keller, Deck & Carr, 2005* Including Reading Material covered for each exam - Marcis, Keller, Deck & Carr, 2005*; Dates & times of special events outside of class Marcis, Keller, Deck & Carr, 2005*; Schedule –Appleby, 1994; Behnke & Miller, 1989; Hammons & Shock, 1994; Lowther, Stark, & Martens, 2004; Parkes & Harris, 2002*; Seeman, 2010; Slattery & Carlson, 2005; Smith & Razzouk, 1993*;
course graphic or cognitive map	Matejka & Kurke, 1994; Nilson, 2007
course requirements-homework, tests, labs, group work	Requirements – types of assessment (tests, homework, papers, group work, labs, collaboration, etc.) Doolittle & Siudzinski, 2010; Marcis, Keller, Deck & Carr, 2005*; Seeman, 2010; and participation Hrycaj, 2006*; Marcis, Keller, Deck & Carr, 2005*; Parkes, Fix & Harris, 2003* ; # of exams ; Appleby, 1994; Brosman, 1989; Marcis, Keller, Deck & Carr, 2005*
course guide for learning/studying outside of class	Behnke & Miller, 1989; online citations – Doolittle & Siudzinski, 2010; Grunert O'Brien, Millis, & Cohen, 2008; Hockensmith, 1988; Kousha & Thelwall, 2008*; amount of work -Marcis, Keller, Deck & Carr, 2005*; Parkes & Harris, 2002*
suggested reading outside of class including web links	Behnke & Miller, 1989; online citations – Kousha & Thelwall, 2008*; Grunert O'Brien, Millis, & Cohen, 2008; Doolittle & Siudzinski, 2010; Lowther, Stark, & Martens, 1989; Parkes & Harris, 2002*; Afros & Schryer, 2009*, p. 224) – citations in an online syllabus – Kousha & Thelwall, 2008*

Grading Information:	
grading/assessment criteria (specifics of assignments – rubrics; type of tests, etc.)	Appleby, 1994; Behnke & Miller, 1989; Doolittle & Siudzinski, 2010; Eberly, Newton & Wiggins, 2001*; Hammons & Shock,1994; Lowther, Stark & Martens, 1989; Marcis, Keller, Deck & Carr, 2005*; Matejka & Kurke, 1994; Parkes, Fix & Harris, 2003*; Parkes & Harris, 2002*; Passman & Green, 2009; Seeman, 2010; Slattery & Carlson, 2005; Smith & Razzouk, 1993*; rubrics - Grunert O'Brien, Millis, & Cohen, 2008
grading scale	Appleby, 1994; Behnke & Miller, 1989; Doolittle & Siudzinski, 2010; Hammons & Shock,1994; Lowther, Stark & Martens, 1989; Marcis, Keller, Deck & Carr, 2005*; Matejka & Kurke, 1994; Parkes & Harris, 2002*; Passman & Green, 2009; Slattery & Carlson, 2005
course feedback (when will student receive progress information)	Slattery & Carlson, 2005
student role & responsibilities	Eberly, Newton & Wiggins, 2001*; Grunert O'Brien, Millis, & Cohen, 2008; Classroom behaviors - Seeman, 2010
student academic conduct	Doolittle & Siudzinski, 2010; Eberly, Newton & Wiggins, 2001*; Seeman, 2010
student academic honesty	Hammons & Shock, 1994; Marcis, Keller, Deck & Carr, 2005*; Passman & Green, 2009; Seeman, 2010

Policy Information:	
extra credit policy	Hammons & Shock, 1994; Marcis, Keller, Deck & Carr, 2005*; Matejka & Kurke, 1994
attendance policy	Davis, 1993; Doolittle & Lusk, 2007*; Doolittle & Siudzinski, 2010; Marcis, Keller, Deck & Carr, 2005*; Passman & Green, 2009; Seeman, 2010
revision or redoing policy	Davis, 1993; Doolittle & Lusk, 2007*; Doolittle & Siudzinski, 2010; Marcis, Keller, Deck & Carr, 2005*; Passman & Green, 2009
makeup policies and late assignments	Doolittle & Siudzinski, 2010; Marcis, Keller, Deck & Carr, 2005*; makeup exams; Davis, 1993; Doolittle & Lusk, 2007*' Passman & Green, 2009;
incomplete policy	Davis, 1993; Doolittle & Lusk, 2007*; Passman & Green, 2009
plagiarism policy	Davis, 1993; Doolittle & Lusk, 2007*; Passman & Green, 2009; Seeman, 2010
disability services policy	Doolittle & Lusk, 2007*; Marcis, Keller, Deck & Carr, 2005*
classroom civility in discourse	Grunert O'Brien, Millis, & Cohen, 2008
classroom management policies: cell phones, ipods, eating,	Seeman, 2010

Syllabus extras:	**(Miscellaneous Syllabi Components)**
Space for classmate contact information	
Actual ‘contract’ for students to sign and return	Smith & Razzouk, 1993*; Matejka & Kurke, 1994, p. 115
Copyright designation on the syllabus as protection for instructor especially with online syllabi	especially on web versions - Gifford, 2003
Disclaimer on syllabus that it is tentative-subject to change	Altman, 1989; Appleby, 1994; Behnke & Miller, 1989; Hammons & Shock, 1994; Nilson, 2007

The asterisk (*) means the reference is a study.

Appendix D
Raw Data Tables and Graph

Table A.1 *Instructor Information Components*

	Essential Scale						Useful Scale					
	n	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5 (%)	n	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5 (%)
Expectations of Students	124	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	12 (10.5)	19 (15.3)	92 (74.2)	122	0 (0.0)	1 (.8)	12 (9.8)	29 (23.8)	80 (65.6)
What Students can Expect	124	7 (5.6)	10 (7.9)	28 (22.2)	36 (28.6)	43 (34.1)	123	5 (4.0)	7 (5.6)	27 (21.4)	43 (34.1)	41 (32.5)
Encourage Participation	124	12 (9.7)	12 (9.7)	22 (17.7)	41 (33.1)	37 (29.8)	122	8 (6.5)	9 (7.3)	23 (18.5)	49 (39.5)	36 (29.3)
Encourage Students to Ask	124	8 (6.5)	9 (7.3)	23 (18.5)	49 (39.5)	35 (28.2)	122	5 (4.1)	12 (9.8)	26 (21.3)	40 (32.8)	39 (32.0)
Methods of Instruction	122	13 (10.7)	12 (9.8)	38 (31.1)	29 (23.8)	30 (24.6)	121	10 (8.3)	9 (7.4)	41 (33.9)	30 (24.8)	31 (25.6)
Evaluation from students	122	35 (27.8)	15 (11.9)	22 (17.5)	15 (11.9)	35 (27.8)	120	30 (23.8)	15 (11.9)	26 (20.6)	15 (11.9)	35 (27.0)
Teaching Tools	120	14 (11.7)	13 (10.8)	40 (33.3)	26 (21.7)	27 (22.5)	118	11 (9.3)	11 (9.3)	38 (32.2)	33 (28.0)	25 (21.2)
Tips on How to Succeed in Course	123	13 (10.6)	17 (13.8)	43 (35.0)	23 (18.7)	27 (22.0)	122	5 (4.1)	18 (14.8)	34 (27.9)	34 (27.9)	31 (25.4)
Philosophy of Teaching	124	32 (25.8)	24 (19.4)	35 (28.2)	18 (14.5)	15 (12.1)	122	23 (18.9)	20 (16.4)	39 (32.0)	18 (14.8)	22 (18.0)
Assumptions about students	120	42 (35.0)	12 (10.0)	44 (36.7)	9 (7.5)	13 (10.8)	118	40 (33.9)	12 (10.2)	36 (30.5)	17 (14.4)	13 (11.0)
Cell Phone Number	124	96 (77.4)	6 (4.8)	10 (8.1)	5 (4.0)	7 (5.6)	122	71 (58.2)	13 (10.7)	17 (13.9)	12 (9.8)	9 (7.4)
Social Networking ID	124	111 (89.5)	6 (4.8)	5 (4.0)	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	123	98 (75.6)	10 (8.1)	14 (11.4)	5 (4.1)	1 (0.8)

Table A.2 *Course Information Components*

	Essential Scale						Useful Scale					
	n	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5 (%)	n	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5 (%)
Textbooks & ISBN	124	1 (0.8)	3 (2.4)	7 (5.6)	17 (13.7)	96 (77.4)	122	2 (1.6)	1 (0.8)	10 (8.2)	22 (18.0)	87 (71.3)
Calendar/outline/assignments	121	1 (0.8)	4 (3.3)	7 (5.8)	16 (13.2)	93 (76.9)	119	1 (0.8)	2 (1.7)	6 (5.0)	19 (16.0)	91 (76.5)
Requirements - Homework, etc.	122	1 (0.8)	2 (1.6)	5 (4.1)	24 (19.7)	90 (73.8)	122	2 (1.6)	1 (0.8)	6 (4.9)	28 (23.0)	85 (69.7)
Objectives	123	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	8 (6.5)	27 (22.0)	86 (69.9)	121	1 (0.8)	2 (1.7)	13 (10.7)	32 (26.4)	73 (60.3)
Goals	123	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	8 (6.5)	31 (25.2)	82 (66.7)	121	1 (0.8)	2 (1.7)	13 (10.7)	34 (28.1)	71 (58.7)
Description	124	0 (0.0)	4 (3.2)	15 (12.1)	28 (22.6)	77 (62.1)	122	1 (0.8)	5 (4.1)	25 (20.5)	26 (21.3)	65 (53.3)
Outcomes	122	5 (4.0)	6 (4.8)	18 (14.3)	30 (23.8)	63 (50.0)	120	4 (3.2)	8 (6.3)	21 (16.7)	30 (23.8)	57 (45.2)
Course Content	120	8 (6.7)	6 (5.0)	22 (18.3)	33 (27.5)	51 (42.5)	120	8 (6.7)	9 (7.5)	24 (20.0)	29 (24.2)	30 (41.7)
Materials (Handouts/supplies)	123	13 (10.6)	10 (8.1)	20 (16.3)	36 (29.3)	44 (35.8)	121	10 (8.3)	8 (6.6)	21 (17.4)	35 (28.9)	47 (38.8)
Webpage/online presence	121	14 (11.6)	7 (5.8)	30 (24.8)	29 (24.0)	41 (33.9)	121	11 (9.1)	4 (3.3)	29 (24.0)	27 (22.3)	50 (41.3)
Prerequisites	122	32 (26.2)	9 (7.4)	26 (21.3)	16 (13.1)	39 (32.0)	121	28 (23.1)	7 (5.8)	31 (25.6)	18 (14.9)	37 (30.6)
Suppose Services Available	122	23 (18.9)	17 (13.9)	42 (34.4)	19 (15.6)	21 (17.2)	122	18 (14.8)	15 (12.3)	36 (29.5)	26 (21.3)	27 (22.1)
Library Resources	121	18 (14.9)	18 (14.9)	42 (34.7)	28 (23.1)	15 (12.4)	121	14 (11.6)	21 (17.4)	38 (31.4)	27 (22.3)	21 (17.4)
Guide for studying outside of class	120	27 (22.5)	19 (15.8)	43 (35.8)	19 (15.8)	12 (10.0)	120	20 (16.7)	16 (13.3)	41 (34.2)	25 (20.8)	18 (15.0)
Suggested Reading outside of class	122	26 (21.3)	15 (12.3)	49 (40.2)	20 (16.4)	12 (9.8)	121	21 (17.4)	13 (10.7)	39 (32.2)	30 (24.8)	18 (14.9)
Drop date	122	64 (52.5)	13 (10.7)	22 (18.0)	11 (9.0)	12 (9.8)	122	40 (32.8)	14 (11.5)	35 (28.7)	12 (9.8)	21 (17.2)
Graphic or cognitive map	117	68 (54.0)	18 (14.3)	17 (13.5)	7 (5.6)	7 (5.6)	116	52 (41.3)	16 (12.7)	26 (20.6)	11 (8.7)	11 (9.5)

Table A.3 *Grading Information Components*

	Essential Scale						Useful Scale					
	n	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5 (%)	n	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5 (%)
Academic Honesty	125	2 (1.6)	2 (1.6)	4 (3.2)	14 (11.2)	103 (82.4)	123	4 (3.3)	10 (8.1)	12 (9.8)	18 (14.6)	79 (64.2)
Grading Scale	125	2 (1.6)	2 (1.6)	10 (8.0)	21 (16.8)	90 (72.0)	123	1 (0.8)	7 (5.7)	11 (8.9)	20 (16.3)	84 (68.3)
Academic Conduct	125	1 (0.8)	4 (3.2)	8 (6.4)	27 (21.6)	85 (68.0)	123	4 (3.3)	9 (7.3)	16 (13)	28 (22.8)	66 (53.7)
Assessment Criteria	125	6 (4.8)	7 (5.6)	17 (13.6)	19 (15.2)	76 (60.8)	123	3 (2.4)	8 (6.5)	12 (9.8)	28 (22.8)	72 (58.5)
Student Role & Responsibility	125	6 (4.8)	9 (7.2)	25 (20.0)	30 (24.0)	55 (44.0)	123	7 (5.8)	9 (7.3)	24 (19.5)	37 (30.1)	46 (37.4)
Feedback/progress information	124	19 (15.3)	20 (16.1)	30 (24.2)	29 (23.4)	26 (21.0)	123	13 (10.6)	15 (12.2)	34 (27.6)	30 (24.4)	31 (25.2)

Table A.4 *Policy Information Components*

	Essential Scale						Useful Scale					
	n	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5 (%)	n	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4(%)	5 (%)
Plagiarism/Cheating	125	4 (3.2)	1 (0.8)	3 (2.4)	18 (14.4)	99 (79.2)	123	6 (4.9)	5 (4.1)	6 (4.9)	21 (17.1)	85 (69.1)
Disability Service	123	6 (4.9)	4 (3.3)	11 (8.9)	14 (11.4)	88 (71.5)	121	4 (3.3)	6 (5.0)	20 (16.5)	15 (12.4)	76 (62.8)
Attendance	124	5 (4.0)	4 (3.2)	16 (12.9)	19 (15.3)	80 (64.5)	121	5 (4.1)	5 (4.1)	21 (17.4)	21 (17.4)	69 (57.0)
Makeup & Late Assignments	124	4 (3.2)	6 (4.8)	12 (9.7)	30 (24.2)	72 (58.1)	120	3 (2.5)	8 (6.7)	17 (14.2)	25 (20.8)	67 (55.8)
Classroom Management	124	10 (8.1)	7 (5.6)	23 (18.5)	24 (19.4)	60 (48.4)	122	8 (6.6)	9 (7.4)	28 (23.0)	25 (20.5)	52 (42.6)
Civility in Discourse	124	14 (11.3)	6 (4.8)	34 (27.4)	17 (13.7)	53 (42.7)	124	14 (11.3)	10 (8.1)	31 (25.0)	20 (16.1)	49 (39.5)
Revision or Redoing	121	25 (20.7)	10 (8.3)	26 (21.5)	16 (13.2)	44 (36.4)	117	19 (16.2)	10 (8.5)	31 (26.5)	19 (16.2)	38 (32.5)

Incompletes	123	21 (17.1)	16 (13.0)	21 (17.1)	25 (20.3)	40 (32.5)	120	18 (15.0)	13 (10.8)	24 (20.0)	25 (20.8)	40 (33.3)
Extra Credit	122	47 (38.5)	12 (9.8)	22 (18.0)	10 (8.2)	31 (25.4)	120	38 (31.7)	10 (8.3)	26 (21.7)	17 (14.2)	29 (24.2)

Table A.5 *Syllabus Extras Components*

	Essential Scale						Useful Scale					
	n	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5 (%)	n	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5 (%)
Disclaimer	123	17 (13.8)	11 (8.9)	16 (13.0)	13 (10.6)	66 (53.7)	121	15 (12.4)	11 (9.1)	25 (20.7)	10 (8.3)	60 (49.6)
Contacts	122	79 (64.8)	21 (17.2)	13 (10.7)	3 (2.5)	6 (4.9)	120	60 (50.0)	17 (14.2)	22 (18.3)	7 (5.8)	14 (11.7)
Copyright	122	70 (57.4)	22 (18.0)	19 (15.6)	5 (4.1)	6 (4.9)	119	59 (49.6)	17 (14.3)	22 (18.5)	10 (8.4)	11 (9.2)
Contracts	123	83 (67.5)	21 (17.1)	17 (13.8)	0 (0.0)	2 (1.6)	122	67 (54.9)	19 (15.6)	22 (18.0)	6 (4.9)	8 (6.6)

Figure A.1

Top 20 Essential (& Useful) Syllabi Components

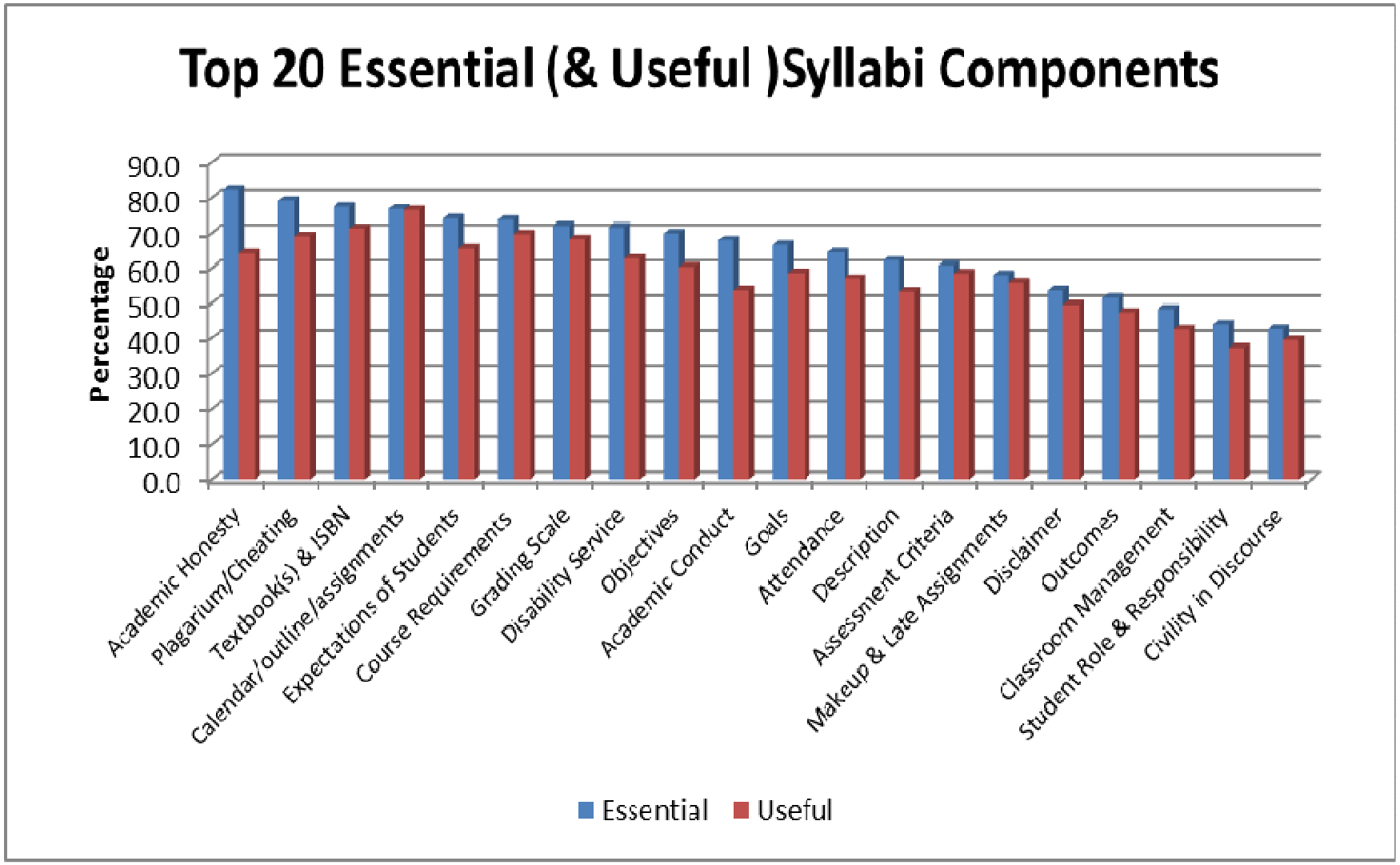

Figure A.2

Bottom 28 Essential (& Useful) Syllabi Components